SATYAJIT RAY

an intimate master

Edited by Santi Das

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CALCUTTA 700 004
INDIA

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AN INTIMATE MASTER
edited by Santi Das
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For Mahendra Mastermoshai —
Teacher of generations of students,
a friend, a lover of knowledge, a guide,
bearing a rich tradition within himself, in the midst of penury,

he nurtured me from my birth,
and yet never imposed anything on me;
he taught me to dedicate myself
to selfless duty
and to love mankind,
with total indifference to money or fame;
a caring 'uncle' and addressed as such
by me and a generation of beneficiaries —

in reverence

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION 2004

Six years after its first appearance, *Satyajit Ray : an intimate master*, reappears as a revised, updated edition in paperback, aimed at a larger readership. The old bibliography, discography and videography have been updated till the close of 2003; and an index, incorporated for the first time, should make it more useful. Sandip Ray, son of Satyajit Ray and a filmmaker in his own right, has shared with me all the information available with him on new publications and new cassettes of Ray's works, translations, and related materials. Samik Bandyopadhyay has once again been a true friend, checking editorially the new inputs with his characteristic care and dedication. Any formal acknowledgment of his involvement with this book will remain woefully inadequate.

Arijit Kumar of Papyrus has been extremely kind in agreeing to give this book a second life.

In spite of our best efforts, a few errors, typographic and otherwise, had crept into the first edition of the book and had been spotted by readers who have been kind enough to draw our attention to them. Readers may note the following corrections.

p. 80 l. 17	Read 'April' for 'May'.
p. 99 l. 1.	Read 'Jamjamat' for 'Asthir'
p. 166	*Aparajito* was produced by Epic Films (Pvt) Ltd.
p. 173	*Abhijan* was shot by Soumendu Roy.
p. 176	*Kapurush O Mahapurush* was shot by Soumendu Roy.
p. 190	*Ganashatru* was shot by Barun Raha.
p. 216	Read '1.2 : The Felu-da stories' at the top of the page.
p. 231	Read 'Nirad' for 'Nirod'.

A few proper names have been spelt inconsistently; Lila and Leela appearing on the same page for instance.

December 2003

SANTI DAS

Contents

Introduction ix

Acknowledgement xviii

In His Times

Satyajit's Childhood and The Child in Satyajit
KALYANI KARLEKAR 1

Ray family photographs between pages 2–3

A Reminiscence
R. P. GUPTA 6

Those Kala Bhavan Days
DINKAR KOUSHIK 17

The Consummate Designer
PARITOSH SEN 27

Satyajit Ray and Advertising
SUBRATA BANERJEE 30

Manik and His Music
ADI GAZDAR 36

The First Time

Stories/Articles/Translations
Poems/Comic Strips 43
Abstraction 44

Designs and sketches between pages 47–49

Designer and Illustrator

The Graphic Talent of Satyajit Ray
K. G. SUBRAMANYAN 51

Designs, paintings, logos and illustrations between pages 54–55

Filmmaker

In the beginning there was *Pather Panchali*
ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN 57

Ray : The Character and His Image
CHARLES TESSON 59

Production stills and sketches between pages 76–77

Satyajit Ray : True–to–life Imagemaker
GASTON ROBERGE 62

Sandesh Revived

Portfolio 80

Writer

The Literary Works of Satyajit Ray
SAROJ BANDYOPADHYAY 83

***Making of* Pather Panchali**

Portfolio 104

His Films
Reviews 107
Stills between pages 132-133
(From PATHER PANCHALI to NAYAK)

Filmography
Chronology of Films 163
Members of Ray's Film Unit 164
Synopses 165
(Features/Documentaries/Shorts)
Stills between 172-173 (From CHIDIAKHANA to AGANTUK including shorts and documentaries)
Colour sketches and designs between pages 188-189

His Contributions to Films made by others 196
Telefilms presented by Ray 197
Films and TV Documentaries on Ray 197
Videography 198
Discography 199

Reception/Recognition
First Felicitation (Bengali) 205
Translation into English 206
Citation of Civic Reception (Bengali) 207
Translation into English 208
Citation of Oscar Award 209
Other Awards 210
Photographs of Ray with others between pages 212-213

Bibliography 215

Biographical profile
Ray family tree 235
Bio-data 236

Supplementary Videography 239
Supplementary Audiography 240
Supplementary Bibliography 241
General Index 245
Index of Names 247
Satyajit Ray's Films : Index 251
Other Films : Index 252

Introduction

There are those exceptional individuals who spark off vibrations in someone else at a first meeting — vibrations bountiful or ominous! Even before one really comes to know the exceptional individual, a first look at him or her is enough to find him/her an intimate acquaintance, or a provocation to resistance. The very first time I met Manik-da [as Satyajit Ray was called by a wide range of friends, acquaintances and members of his production crew] I had the feeling of having known him for ages, known him in my blood, or as part of the dreams of my boyhood.

That first time I had gone to see him, towards the beginning of 1960, carrying invitations for him, on instructions from the seniors of the theatre group to which I then belonged, for a performance of our latest play. The tall man who opened the door of the flat at 3 Lake Temple Road, almost immediately at the ring of the calling bell, was a familiar presence, though I was meeting him for the first time. All the way to the place I had palpitations of excitement at the prospect of meeting the maker of *Pather Panchali*. When I saw him, I was lost in the deep recesses of his creation. The profoundly intimate masterpiece that I had seen on the day of its release at an auditorium in north Calcutta came back to me like a transparency.

The sheer warmth that came through from the very first words of welcome in his rich bass, once I had introduced myself, to the 'come again' with which he saw me off at the door when I was leaving, had all the charge of long familiarity. What fascinated me was the Bengali in him, his hospitality, his conversation, his patient listening almost like a young student whenever there was information on matters unfamiliar. It was all the more fascinating in a man who was already an international celebrity, and to one who had seen and known quite a few celebrated creative persons at close proximity. Soon enough he had pulled down whatever barriers there had been between us, and I had overcome my natural reticence to open up to him in conversation. I found his sincerity exemplary.

My second encounter with him came seven years later, in 1967. Most of the non-professional theatre groups of Calcutta had come together, with a project to set up a model arts complex in the city. Ray was a signatory to the appeal for funds issued by the Natmancha Pratishtha Samiti, along with Annadashankar Roy, Bishnu Dey, Uday Shankar, Ravi Shankar, and Sombhu Mitra. I was primarily a man of theatre. And it was my responsibility to raise the funds and plan the fundraising (subject,

of course, to the approval of the core group). Everybody in the core group objected to the proposal that the signatories to the appeal be asked to raise funds on personal initiative, on the grounds that they were celebrities and busy people. How could one expect someone like Satyajit Ray to spare the time to go fund gathering? I persuaded the group to entrust me with the responsibility. I was confident, on the basis of what I had seen of him at that first encounter, that Ray would cooperate. As a first reaction he regretted his inability, but once I had suggested two or three people who could be approached, he said, 'Oh yes, one could ask them.' And he did speak to them, and it worked. Ray was one who would not join in, unless he was sincerely committed to a project. Lack of time does not become a factor, where there is sincerity. And Ray's sincerity was total.

That is how the relationship began. He was addressing me with the more informal *tumi* instead of *āpni* from the second day itself, and I had started calling him Manik-da. Though I was visiting him initially in connection with business related to the project, I was so powerfully impressed by the integrity of his character that soon it was the deepseated desire to become a more complete man that drew me to him. And the more frequent my visits became, the more eager I became to know him better. The more I talked with him, the more I wondered at the sheer range of his interests and creativity alike, and his magnaminity, till I started to adore him as a monumental genius. And yet, not to speak of the common people, very few of the more enlightened community knew much about him, though he was an international figure already, and had made sixteen full-length feature films, one short film and an outstanding documentary on Rabindranath Tagore. In my travels through the many cities, big and small, of this country, I have found to my dismay that people know almost nothing about him beyond the fact that he made films. They know the titles of one or two of his films. There are several who would not recall even those. There would have been some consolation to know that they at least knew that Ray was an eminent film director who had brought glory to his country by his works. People in Calcutta of course know somewhat more about him, have seen more of his films, and have known Ray as a writer, thanks to the periodical *Sandesh*. But how little all that amounts to!

The scope and opportunity to gather comprehensive information on the multifaceted genius of Ray were woefully inadequate at the time. One could say that they were just not there! Articles on Ray or reviews of his films appeared in periodicals published by people associated with the film society movement, or in the odd little magazine or other. There were of course periodicals published abroad that carried more material on him, but remained inaccessible to common people in this country. The few who could take the trouble of tracking these periodicals down, collecting them or reading them up at a library, could form an impression of Ray as filmmaker, but even they would learn little of the

range of his creativity, or of the man Satyajit Ray, or his enlightened family. For Ray had left his mark in every field of creative endeavour that he had undertaken. It was a sense of frustration that drove me to take upon myself the difficult task of documenting for my contemporaries and posterity alike the life and creativity of Ray. While the urge has been with me for a long time now, I have had to wait till I had the time to accomplish it. For I could not find anyone who could carry out the painstaking investigation and research required for the purpose.

The project as a matter of fact began with the three retrospective festivals of Ray's films that I organized in the seventies. The first, at Bombay, in 1973, a retrospective of eleven films, all of them with English subtitles, was inaugurated by I.K. Gujral, then Central Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Manik-da was present at the inauguration, with his family. All the tickets for the entire session were sold out on the day booking opened. The enthusiasm was perfectly legitimate, for this was the first ever representative festival of the films of Satyajit Ray, who had made eighteen feature films and two documentaries by then. There had been of course packages of three or four films by Ray, organized by film societies, like the one by Anandam in 1966, or one by Dr Georg Lechner of the Max Mueller Bhavan. The response to the two later festivals I organized was no less overwhelming. In 1975, at the Lighthouse Cinema, Calcutta, I offered a package of seven films from Ray's first decade of filmmaking; in 1979, at the Sisir Mancha, Calcutta, I presented a set of seven films from his second decade. The three retrospectives were fundraising exercises for the Natmancha Pratishtha Samiti, the Institute of Child Health, and the Students' Health Home, respectively. The brochures published for all the three festivals contained substantial documentation on Ray and his films. On all three occasions Ray was most helpful in the selection and acquisition of the films, as well as gathering information and designing the brochures, particularly for the event in Bombay. It was his collaboration and unstinted cooperation that enabled us to bring to common filmgoers a sense of the sheer range of the master, and to arouse in them a craving to see more films by him.

But I could take the project up in right earnest only in late 1991, after my retirement from service. I had the opportunity of placing the entire project as I envisaged it before Ray, who patiently studied it, offered suggestions and invaluable advice, and gave me his approval. But when he fell seriously ill a few weeks after this meeting, and passed away, for a while I was too despondent to carry on with the task. I was almost crushed by doubts and a total loss of confidence, as I wondered how I could complete the task without Ray's direct involvement, cooperation and constant guidance. It took me quite some time to overcome my unproductive and negative thoughts. A couple or so of friends

encouraged me. And then there were the words of Cardinal Newman :

> A man would do nothing
> if he waited until
> he would do it so well
> That no one would find fault
> with what he has done.

Once I had made up my mind, I would never look back. There was already a gap of twenty years between when I had first felt the urge and when I took the project on. Meanwhile, relatively at least, with several books on Ray in print, more information was accessible on Ray. There were developments towards what could already be construed as a field of Ray studies. But there were too many gaps still in factual documentation, with several lost clues and inadequate hard evidence, scaring potential scholars or investigators away from any effort in the direction. Most of the books on Ray amount to critical assessments of his works in cinema from the authors' personal critical positions; with occasional comments on his literary works or his creativity as illustrator or designer. They had hardly anything to add to the information that we had collected for our three brochures in the seventies.

Even as the present project concentrates on gathering all relevant facts, checking and counterchecking them for authentication, and offering them in a systematic structure, it also proposes to offer a comprehensive profile of his multifaceted personality and achievements in the form of a bunch of specially commissioned articles by people eminently qualified to comment on and evaluate aspects of his life and works. For people outside Bengal and for foreigners in general, Ray remained primarily a filmmaker, for though he had started his professional career in a different medium, he later settled down to a full-time career in filmmaking which he made into his profession. He came to writing much later, and that too only to fill the pages of *Sandesh*. If he had chosen to make a profession of any of the other skills in which he had shown proficiency he could have easily accomplished the stature that he came to enjoy in his chosen field. In the present volume we make an effort to offer a perspective of the entire range of creativity that Ray explored in a lifetime, through a laboriously gathered accumulation of facts, illustrations, and assessments. All that had been charted out at the start of the project has not been accomplished, but several new ideas or insights that came as I pursued the project have led to fresh searches and findings alike.

The authors of the earlier significant works on Ray have offered their views and evaluations of Ray, something that I have scrupulously avoided. All that I have done, in a more modest exercise, is to bring together a substantial body of material that should give readers an opportunity to have a closer and objective view of Ray the man and his work. I had the advantage of knowing, from my association

with Ray over the years, particularly in connection with editing and producing the brochures for the three retrospectives that I had arranged, of some of the people whose opinons and criticism he valued. Whenever I have taken on a project related to his work, I have tried to pursue it in a manner that he would have liked. It is only natural that a person of his stature and commitment should have strong likes and preferences. He was extremely meticulous even in the smallest things. When his typewriter went out of order, he would insist on writing all his letters by hand, for he could not trust the professional typists to keep the right margins!

The volume is divided into a number of sections.

For the first section devoted to Ray in his time, I had asked a cousin of Ray's and a few of his contemporaries, who knew him closely and for whom Ray had great regard, to write about his childhood, his days at the Kala Bhavan in Santiniketan, the cultural and intellectual background that lay behind his filmmaking, his innovations in graphic design and film music. Ms Karlekar's childhood reminiscences, Dinkar Kowshik's recollections of the artistic apprenticeship he shared with Ray, and the reconstruction of the cultural setting in which Ray developed in the pieces by Subrata Banerjee, R. P. Gupta, Paritosh Sen and Adi Gazdar add up to what amounts to a loosely woven narrative of the making of an artist.

Of a different kind are the contributions by K.G. Subramanyan, Saroj Bandyopadhyay and Gaston Roberge, eminent critics in their own right, offering perceptive and authoritative evaluations of Ray as graphic designer, writer and filmmaker respectively.

Adoor Gopalakrishnan was the one younger Indian filmmaker for whom Ray had great respect and regard. In Malayalam Adoor Gopalakrishnan is also a major commentator on cinema. I am privileged to carry a piece by him recording his debt to Ray.

Most of the handpicked contributors agreed readily, and sent in their pieces on time. There were a few whom we approached later, after Samik had come on the scene, and he and I had agreed to expand the scope of the volume. Father Gaston Roberge, who had had the privilege of a long association with Ray, handed over to us a complete file of his writings on Ray, and let us make whatever use we made of the material. Father Roberge's article in the present volume is an editorial reconstruction from a couple of his uncollected pieces. On a recent visit to the city, Father Roberge gave his approval to the 'edited' version. The piece by Charles Tesson, translated specially for this volume, was included on his advice.

There is a long section of selected reviews of Ray's films, published in India and abroad. I had included a smaller section of reviews in the brochures for the Ray retrospectives that I had published, and it was Ray himself who had taken all the trouble of hunting most of these out from his personal files. I was hoping to make a more representative selection for the present volume. With the best of

efforts, we were not able to locate a comprehensive index of reviews of Ray's films. Hence tracking the reviews down was more chancy than systematic. But even when important reviews were tracked down, copyright owners often proved a stumbling block, with some of them not responding to our prayers for clearance, and others quoting unreasonable fees. Where we had the addresses of the critics themselves, and we could write to them directly, they were kinder and more cooperative. Pauline Kael in particular went out of her way to send me a copy of the most recently published collection of her reviews, with a most generous blanket permission to reprint anything that she had written! Though there is no way we can claim the section of reviews to be truly representative, I can claim the satisfaction of having been able to include most of the critics and particular reviews that Manik-da had liked.

This section includes only one review that originally appeared in Bengali, and has been translated into English specially for the present volume, as a historic piece—as the first ever long review, and a perceptive one at that, of a film by Ray.

Without any solid research or archival base to fall back on, the bibliography (of books and periodicals) is bound to have gaps, but this bibliography covering Ray's books and uncollected essays in periodicals, his letters to the editors, interviews with him and by him, and translations from his works in several languages, can claim to be the most comprehensive and substantial till now at least. The filmography, videography and discography, and information on the music that he had arranged and composed for films made by other directors are more comprehensive.

Maybe we should explain the major omission in the bibliography, viz. a listing of articles and reviews in Bengali, critiquing Ray and his films. They are scattered in so many periodicals that it would be quite a task to track them all down and list them. Without any mechanism that could facilitate the exercise, we felt that it would be unfair to list the few that came handy, and leave out the rest that we could not lay our hands on.

His love for drawing, hereditary perhaps, remained with him till the end, though he had asserted more than once that he was a filmmaker first, and a draughtsman only second. As an illustrator and graphic designer he had made it to the top within a very short time, with a distinctive style of his own, evident in his book covers, advertisement designs and book illustrations, and in the logos, brochures, posters and other publicity material he designed for his own films. He never repeated himself, and moved at ease from brushwork to pen and ink, from black and white to colour. Even his shooting scripts, with the shots sketched in, were works of art. There have been few professional artists or designers who have covered such a wide range. It is a pity however that very little of his original artworks has been preserved. Very few of the artworks he produced even after he had become an international celebrity have survived. An awareness of the real value of these works has been slowly emerging only after his

death, though his reputation and standing in the field had been made already in the fifties, even before he had made his first film. In the early forties he had made cover designs for *Rangmashal,* a popular children's periodical of the period, and had begun illustrating stories in books and periodicals. And then, of course, when he came to design book covers for Signet Press, he created history. His success as a commercial artist in advertising followed. For the present volume, we have been able to locate and reproduce several of these illustrations and cover designs, but there is almost nothing new that we can offer in terms of advertising material, for there are few surviving who would be able to identify and say for certain that a particular insertion was one of those that Ray had designed. O.C. Gangoli, the last of those who could, was most cooperative and obliging, but he too passed away as we plodded away, speculating on the authorship of insertions in *The Statesman* from the period that Ray had been at work, and studying the logbooks of the advertising agency in the hope of finding some clues at least. A sampling of his work in the field is the best that we could come up with. All the drawings and designs that appear in this book are by Ray himself. For the titles in the flyleaves and prelims, we use Ray Roman, a typographical family designed by Ray.

For more than a quarter of a century Ray was deeply involved with *Sandesh,* the children's periodical that his grandfather had launched. As editor and illustrator, he took pride in carrying on with a tradition, that we have documented in an introductory note to the bunch of *Sandesh* illustrations we have reproduced.

A similar introductory note on the making of *Pather Panchali* precedes a selection of working stills and photographs shot by Bansi Chandragupta (1926–1981), Ray's friend and art director, and an artist in his own right, along with other relevant material, including pages from Ray's own original script, now housed at Cinemathéque Francaise. The documentation offers insight into the creativity of a master filmmaker in the first efflorescence of his genius, and leaves the reader—and viewer—in a state of wonder and exhilaration, and admiration for the indomitable self-assurance and courage that inspired the young artist.

A carefully authenticated biographical resumé, with a chronological list of awards and honours, and a documentation of the 'beginnings', i.e. his first essays at the different forms or modes which Ray chose for his own, should be of interest and use to the reader, who would be thrilled to learn that Ray, at the age of nineteen, had begun his artistic career as designer of a cover for one of his father's books.

In one of the reviews included in this volume, a foreign critic acknowledges her failure to 'quite come to terms with pronouncing' Ray's name. In the present volume, readers with similar problems can refer to the chronology of Ray's films, the filmography, the discography and videography, and the

bibliography, for a guide to pronunciation for the titles of Ray's films and a substantial body of related titles and names, for which we have used a simple diacritical system. For the rest of the volume, we use the titles and names without diacritics, to make reading smoother.

This volume, inadequate and imperfect on many counts, is only a step towards the accomplishment of the ultimate project—a complete documentation and projection of the life, works, and achievements of Satyajit Ray. I can assure the reader that I do not consider this publication the end and culmination of my search and mission, which I cherish and remain committed to pursue. The volume, I am very well aware, bears all the signs and limitations of an individual endeavour without any institutional support. But what should make the work of any future scholar in the field somewhat easier is that a lot of new material is made available in this volume, and a lot of information, previously available, has been freshly checked and corrected and authenticated.

I would not have dared to undertake this venture without Manik-da's generous approval and initial support. For he had chosen all the photographs for those three brochures for the retrospectives, and tracked down information from his mother's collection. All of that material has gone into the present volume. It was his son Sandip who came to my assistance when I started work on this volume. He had provided me unstintingly with corroboration for dates and facts, and with the widest range of material, including books, copies of *Sandesh* and other periodicals, photographs (including the set shot by Bansi Chandragupta), and allowed me to copy his father's original illustrations, sketches, covers, and other material. And there are of course many photographs shot by Sandip himself and not published so far. Without his trust and generosity and patience, I would not have been able to accomplish even a part of what I have done. I shall remain ever grateful to him. Both father and son have contributed so generously and substantially to this project that in a sense they can be credited as the real *authors* of this work.

But I do not see how I can credit the contribution and role of Samik Bandyopadhyay whom I have known for over three decades, in a different capacity—as a person with intimate connections with all the arts and artists in different modes and practices. I had also known of his standing and popularity as a teacher. But having lost touch with him, I had not known about his professional standing as an editor. It was a younger friend who suggested Samik's name when I had already gathered the larger part of the material, and was looking for someone to edit it into publishable shape. The friend warned me that Samik was a busy man, and overburdened with assignments. But Samik agreed to take it on after a first look at the material—obviously from his admiration and reverence for Satyajit Ray. Working with Samik was not an easy affair, and demanded considerable patience. Samik takes his time, but he is meticulous in his editing. He has contributed fresh inputs, ideas, and information to the book in

its final form, and suggested changes, elaborations and even a few exclusions, but all within the parameters that I had set for my book—and the suggestions invariably came with a lot of persuasive argument, and the final decisions were taken after long discussion. A substantial part of the merits of the book goes to Samik's credit.

But the volume remains essentially my work, my personal selection, made of my perceptions and my taste. Samik, with all his editorial interventions, kept this in mind all through. A translator of standing, Samik has translated quite a few substantial contributions from the originals in Bengali. His participation in the making of this book has been more a labour of love than a professional assignment.

I shall carry with me till the end of my life a host of memories of conversations and sharing of information and reminiscences with people who knew and adored Ray, and came forward to help me in my project, some of them close relations, others friends and colleagues—like Kalyani-di [Karlekar], who, in addition to her memoiral piece, gave me invaluable information on Ray's family antecedents, and rare pictures; Bijoya-boudi [Ray], who was always available for consultation and gave me a substantial number of unpublished pictures. Mr. R.P. Gupta was a store of information, and generous with clues and suggestions. Dinkar Kowshik gave me a lot of information, a rare photograph taken by the late M. Muthuswami, his fellow student at Kala Bhavan, and a few sketches made by Ray when he was a student at Kala Bhavan. I shall remain indebted to them for ever.

The final thanks would go to my wife Bithika and son Souvik, who have helped and supported me in so many ways throughout the long time that the project has taken. My wife in particular has borne with exemplary patience all the pressures and inconveniences that have been her lot, and left me free to pursue my mission, just as she has done on every occasion that I had chosen to follow some cause.

The present project is not a celebratory gesture, but an endeavour to record for posterity a measure of the greatness of the man whom I had come to know, and the little that I knew made me yearn to know more about him, and once I came to know him better, I could not keep it to myself, and felt the urge to hand it down to those who did not have the privilege of knowing him. I do not claim the wisdom that could have enabled me to evaluate him and explain his works. All that I have brought together would amount to a framework within which one could place him and his works for a closer reading.

I had once hoped that I would have the joy of presenting Ray himself the first copy of this book —a hope doomed to remain unfulfilled!

SANTI DAS

Acknowledgements

Bijaya Ray and Sandip Ray, for access to the Ray collection, and permission to reproduce a wide range of material, including several unpublished photographs shot by Sandip Ray.

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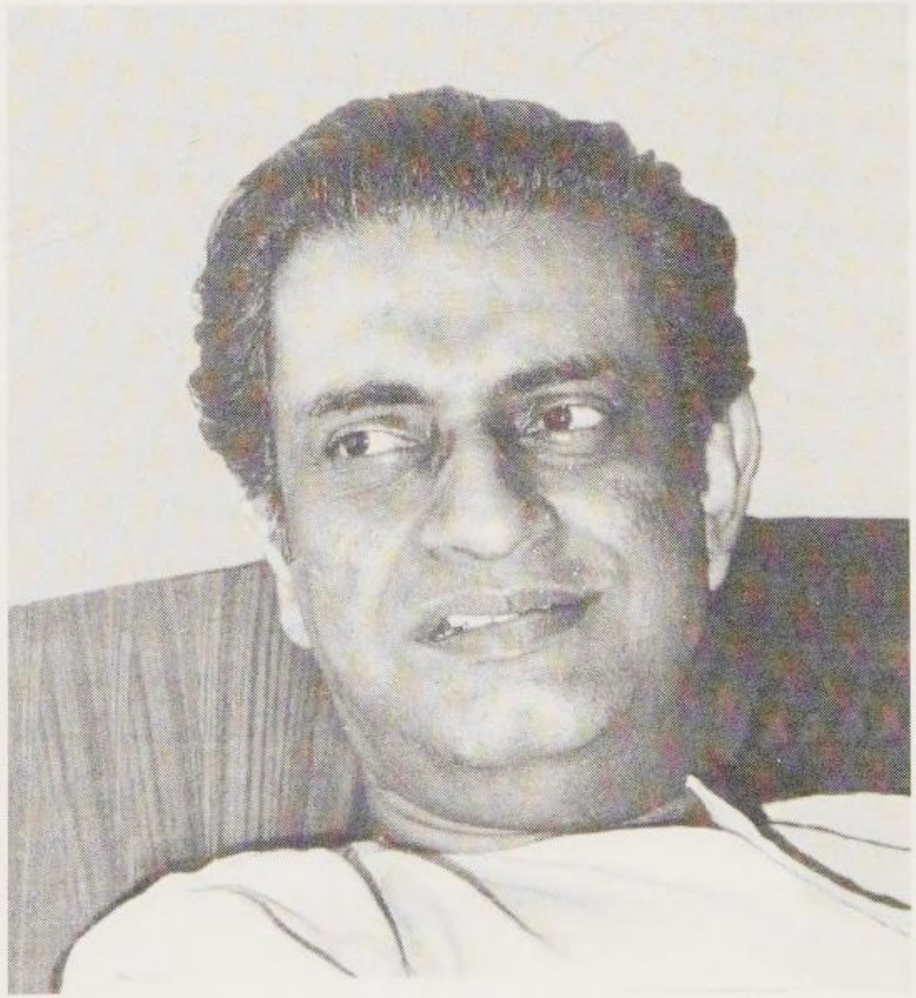
Pauline Kael, Kevin Thomas, *Sight and Sound, The Guardian, Variety, San Francisco Examiner,* and *Ananda Bazar Patrika,* for copyright clearance/permission for reprinting of previously published material. Reviews for which our appeals for copyright clearance remain unanswered are those for *Abhijan* by Marie Seton (*Filmfare*), *Aparajito* by Shamlal and *Goopy Gyne Baga Byne* by Marie Seton (*The Times of India*), *Kapurush O Mahapurush* by Kenneth Tynan (*The Observer Weekend Review*) and *Devi* by Penelope Gilliatt (*The New Yorker*). Our letter to *Films in Review* came back, and, according to our information, *Montage* and *Film* have closed down. We have included *Aparajito* by Henry Hart, and *Mahanagar* by B.H., *Jalsaghar* by Nitin Sethi, *Apur Sansar* by Amalendu Bose and *Nayak* by David McCutchion from these periodicals.

I am indebted to all of them.

SATYAJIT RAY
in his times



Satyajit's Childhood and The Child in Satyajit

KALYANI KARLEKAR

I remember, on the evening of 3 May 1921, a telegram from my uncle Sukumar Ray (1887–1923) from 100 Garpar Road Calcutta — 'Khoka born last night, all well.'

My father Arun Nath Chakravarti was a Deputy Magistrate in the Bihar Civil Service. The 'provinces' of Bihar in those days comprised of Bihar, Orissa and Chhotanagpur. Since then 'provinces' in India have been named 'states' and the province of Bihar and Orissa has been divided into the two states of Bihar and Orissa. Father was then posted at Darbhanga. It was in the government quarters at Laheria Serai, the civil station of Darbhanga, that the news arrived. It meant that a son was born to Sukumar Ray on 2 May 1921.

The house which Upendrakishore Ray (1863–1915) had built at 100 Garpar Road was his home as well as place of business — the printing presses and the photographic studio of U. Ray and Sons. He was Sukumar Ray's father, my maternal grandfather, and paternal grandfather of the new-born. My mother was Sukumar Ray's younger sister. This baby was born seven years after Upendrakishore's death. Kadambini Ganguly (1861–1923), who was one of the first two lady graduates of the world and the first lady doctor of India and Sukumar Ray's mother's stepmother, acted as midwife at this birth.

As my uncle was in his death-bed at that time suffering from the then incurable disease Kala-Azar my aunt had no time to look after the baby who was left in the care of Sukumar Ray's two cousins, Ila and Madhurilata, daughters of the noted writer of children's books, Upendrakishore's younger brother Kulada Ranjan Ray (1878–1950), who lived in the joint family in the same house. Being ten years older than him, I also joined my aunts playfully in the caring game whenever I happened to be in Calcutta.

Sukumar Ray's younger brother Subinay's (1890–1945) son's name being Dhan (wealth), Sukumar's new-born came to be called Manik (jewel) almost automatically.

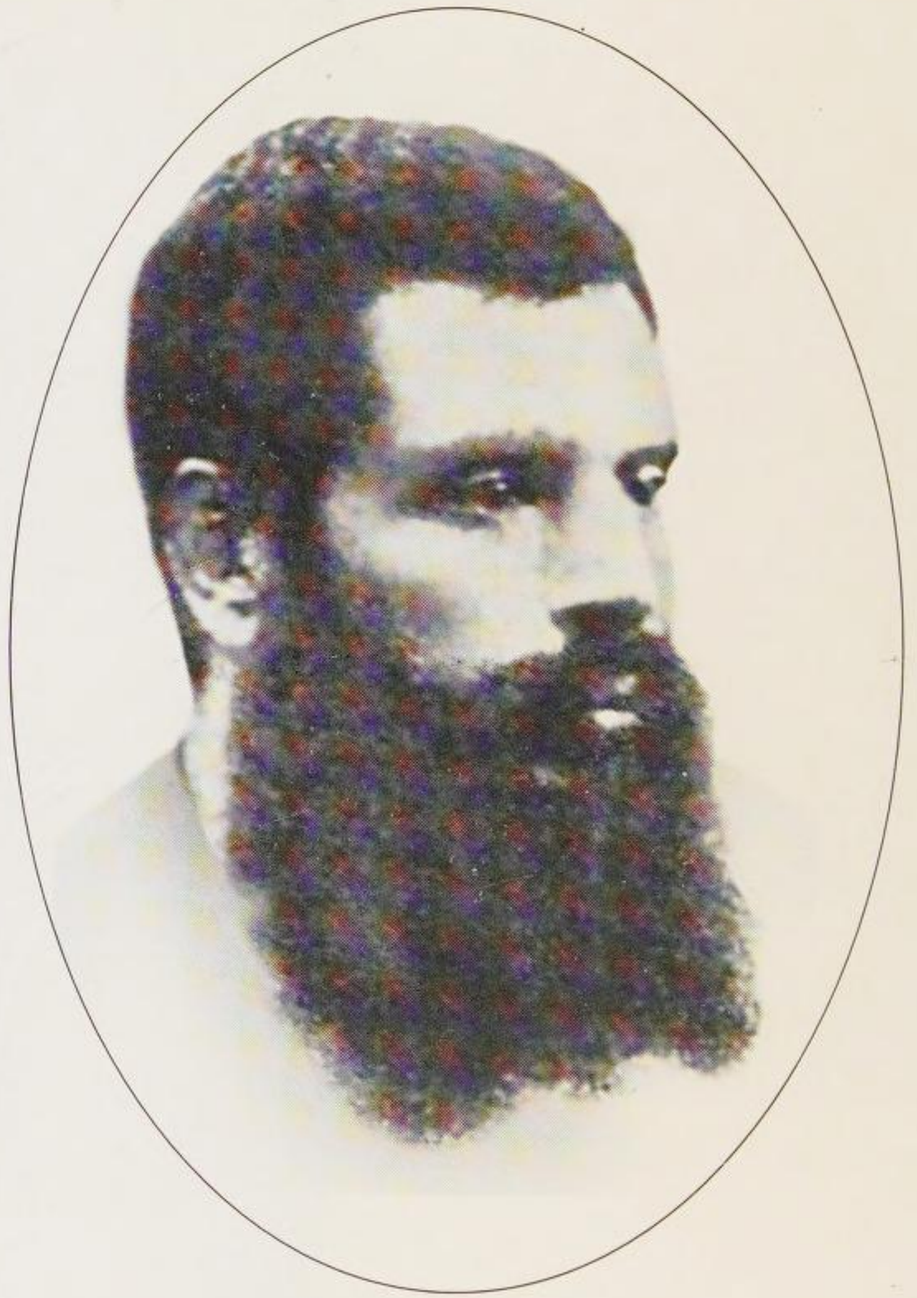
Dwarakanath Ganguly, his wife Kadambini, and Bidhumukhi, wife of Upendrakishore : a tradition of progressive thinking, running in the family.

Rabindranath Tagore was a friend of my grandfather Upendrakishore, and Sukumar and his wife Suprabha were very dear to him. When Tagore came to see the baby, Sukumar asked him to select a name for him and requested that the name should be an easy one. Tagore had first jokingly suggested the name Sahaj (easy) in keeping to match the name of Subinay's son Saral (simple), who was five years older than him and then proposed Sarit (rivulet). Sukumar had kept silent at that time and later selected the name Satyajit himself.

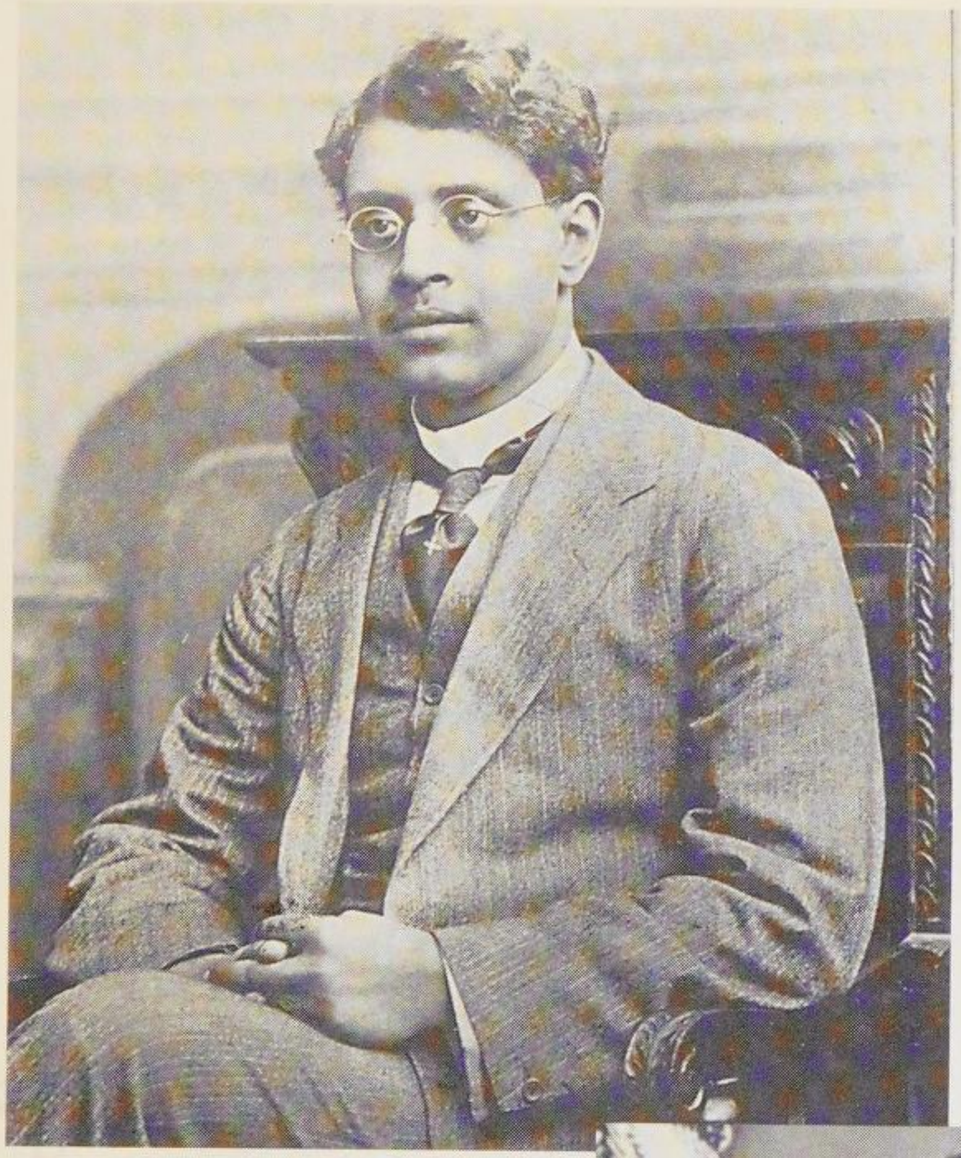
Prasanta Mahalanobis (1893–1972), the statistician, was a friend and admirer of Sukumar Ray. His younger brother, Praphulla Mahalanobis, was a friend of the family, a daily visitor who later married Kulada Ranjan Ray's daughter Madhurilata. He used to bring records of children's music for Manik and had bought him a little blue gramophone with bright pictures on its body called Kiddyphone.

Upendrakishore and his family, 1913. LEFT TO RIGHT : (*back row*) sister Mrinalini, mother Joytara, elder sister Giribala, (*front row*) brothers Narendrakishore, Saradaranjan, Pramodaranjan, Upendrakishore, Muktidaranjan and Kuladaranjan. Courtesy : Ray family.

Little boy Satyajit, standing at the centre, with mother, cousins and other relations. Courtesy: Ray family.



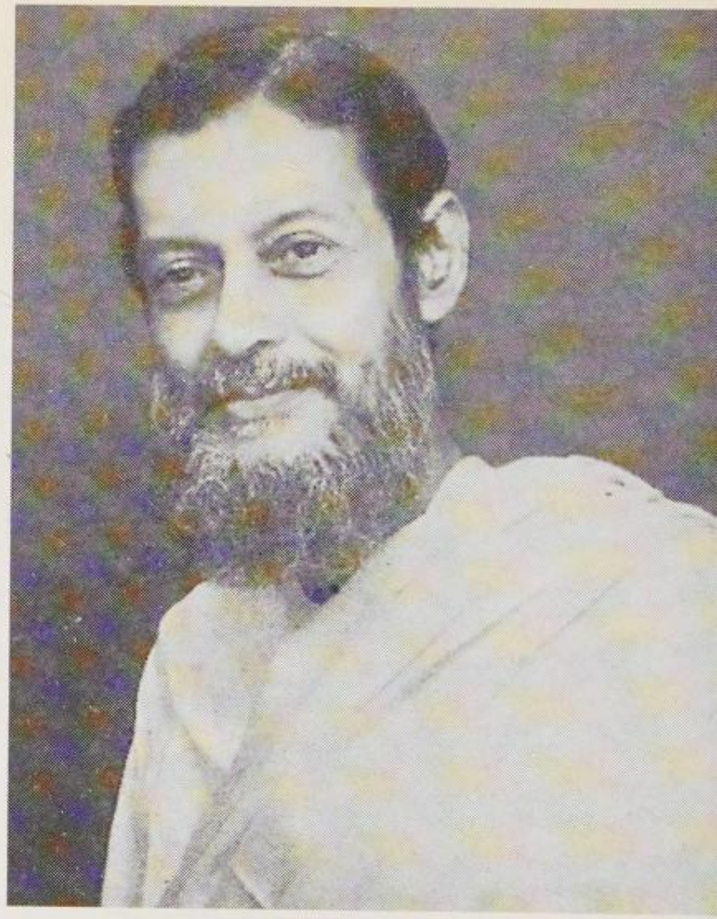
Upendrakishore Ray, Satyajit's grandfather. Courtesy : Ray family.



Sukumar Ray, Satyajit Ray's father. Courtesy : Ray family.

Subinay Ray, Satyajit's uncle. Courtesy : Ray family.

Subimal Ray, Satyajit's uncle. Courtesy : Ray family.

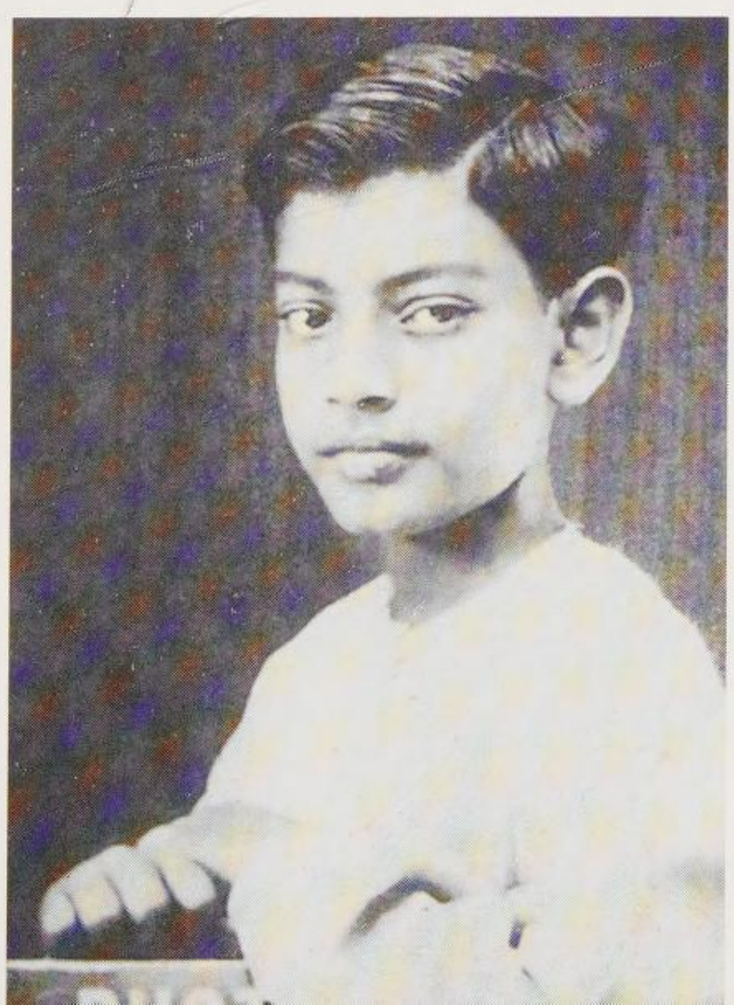


Mother Suprabha Ray with child Satyajit. Courtesy : Ray family.

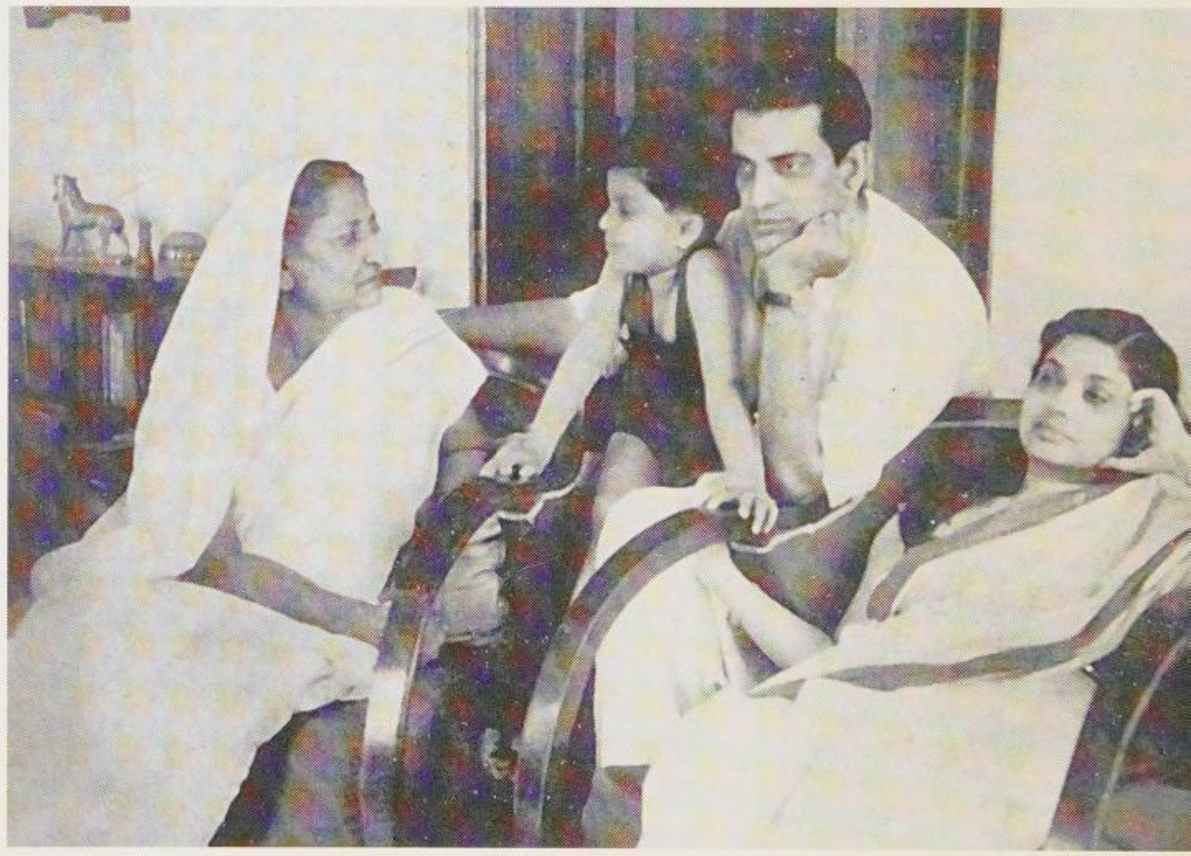
Sukumar and Suprabha Ray, immediately after their wedding on 13 December 1913. Courtesy : Ray family.

Satyajit, aged two, before his father's death. Courtesy : Ray family.

Satyajit, with cousin Saral, son of Subinay, and grandmother Bidhumukhi. Courtesy : Ray family.

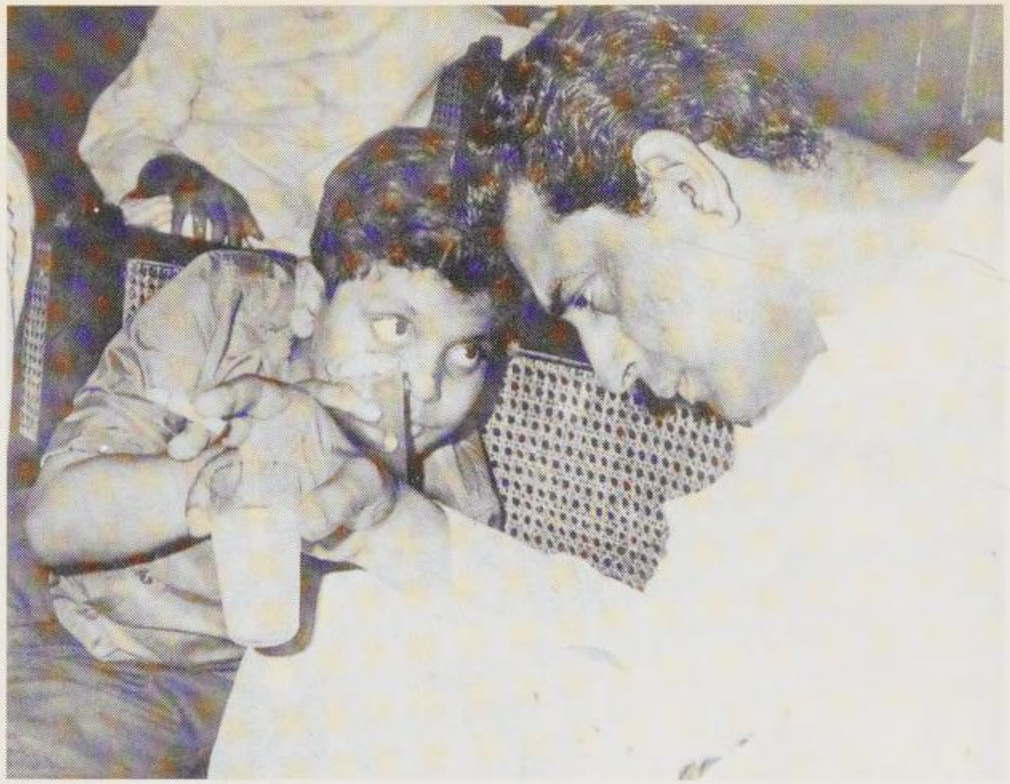


Satyajit at eleven. Courtesy : Ray family.

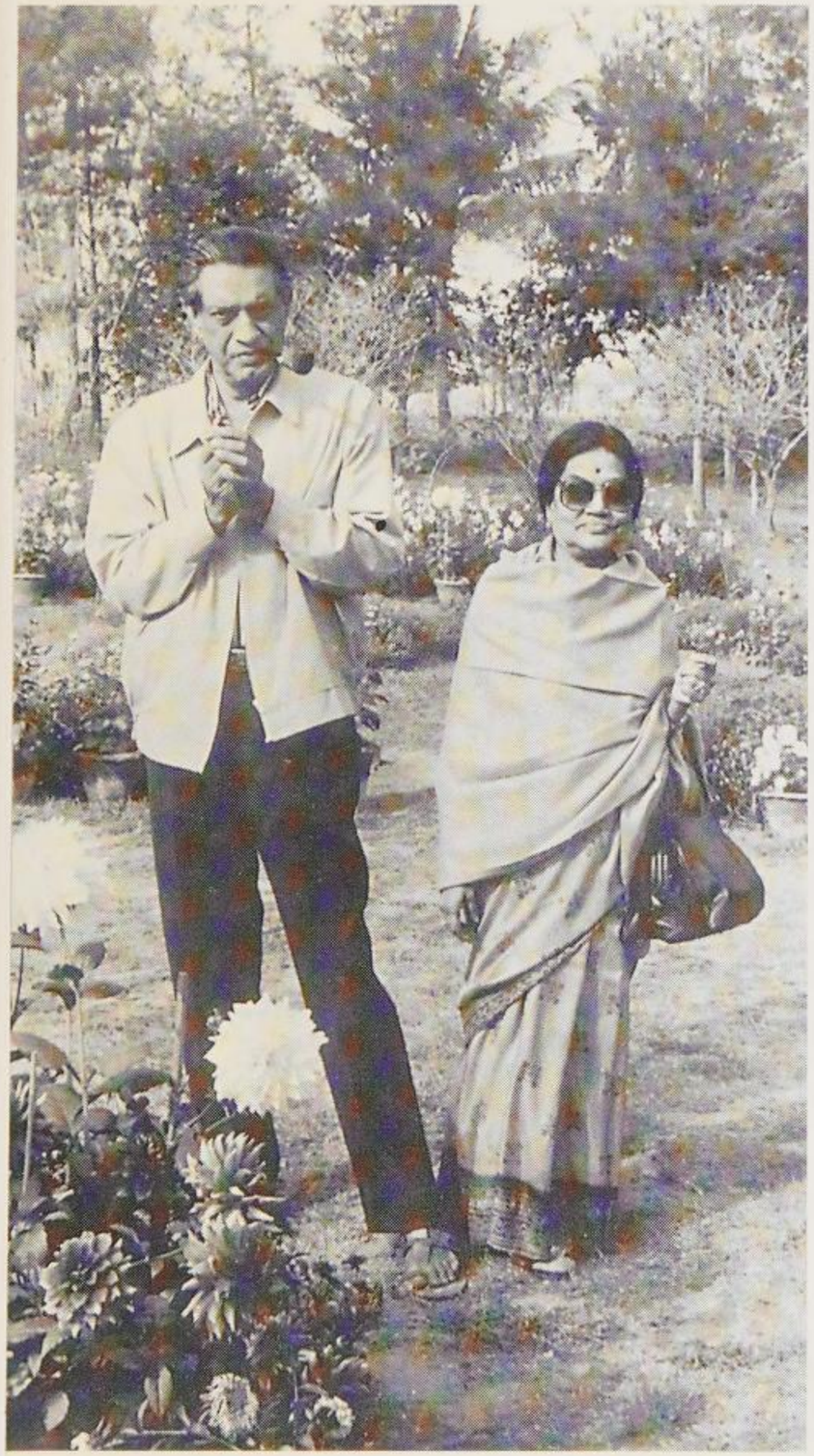


The Ray family in 1957. Left To Right : Suprabha, Sandip, Satyajit and Bijaya. Photograph : Amanul Haque.

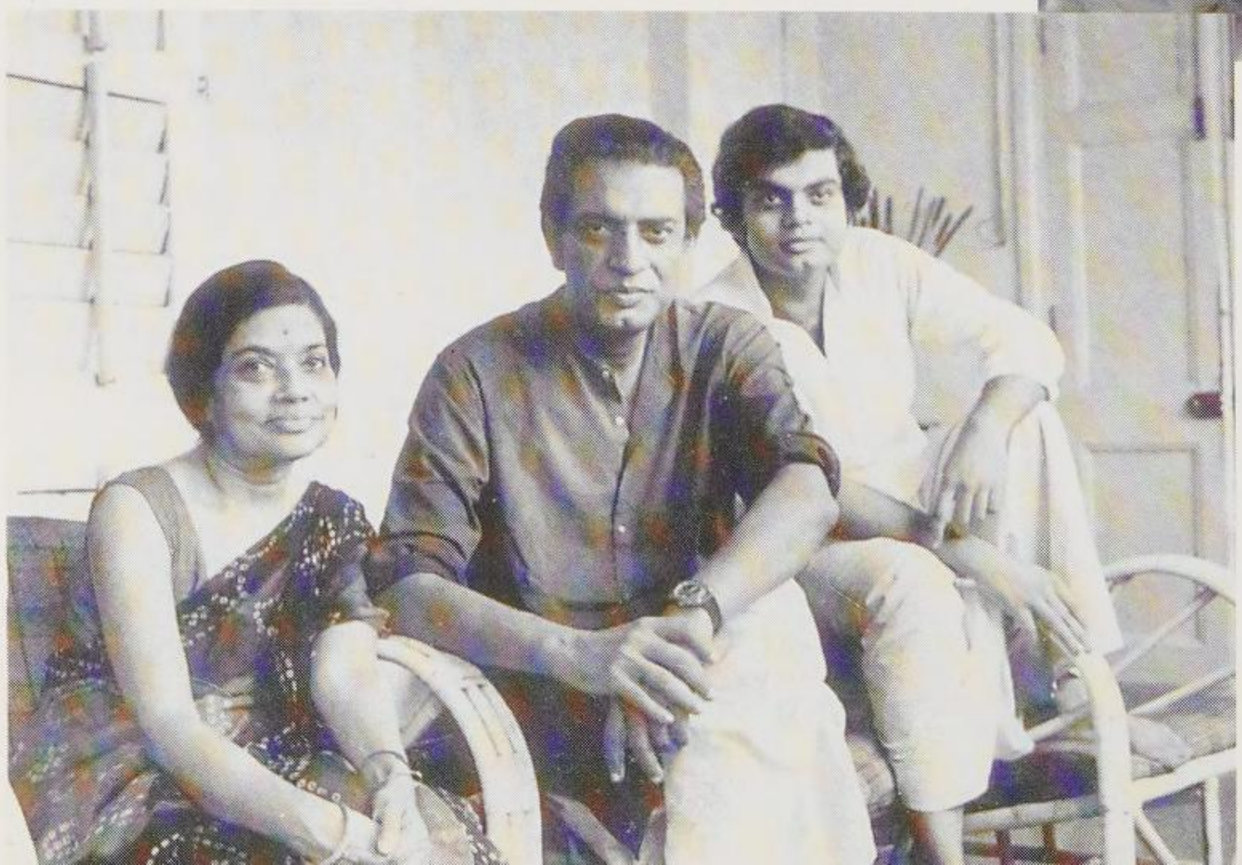
Sandip watching Satyajit.
Courtesy : Ray family.



Satyajit receives a call, with Bijaya beside him. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh.



atyajit , with Bijaya. Courtesy : Ray family.



Bijaya, Satyajit, Sandip.
Photograph :Nemai Ghosh.

As Sukumar Ray was suffering from Kala-Azar no specific medicine for which had yet been invented, the only treatment that doctors could suggest for him was to go to healthy places for 'change of air.' My mother used to go with them on such trips with me and my sister to help and keep company. We enjoyed playing with Manik notwithstanding the differences in our age.

Once, when going to Darjeeling (a hill resort in the Himalayas in Bengal), we had got into a reserved compartment of a railway train. Auntie (Manik's mother) had placed uncle — Sukumar Ray — comfortably in the lower middle berth and was sitting with us on the lower berth on the platform side, chatting with my mother and watching things going on on the station platform while waiting for the train to start.

An old beggar came begging. Auntie gave him a coin from her purse, but he kept on whining for more. She tried to evade him by looking away and chatting with my mother. The man suddenly left the place with smiles and thanking the 'baby boy' profusely. Taken aback, auntie realized later that Manik had somehow got hold of her small coin purse from the handbag and poured out all its contents into the man's outstretched palm.

Manik's naming ceremony was held on 21 July 1923 with a grand party, where he was formally given the name 'Satyajit'.

Sukumar Ray died the same year on 10 September. Manik who was a bit more than two and a half years old at that time had no memory of his father.

Sukumar Ray's younger brother Subinay Ray, who had bravely carried on with the family business through the critical years of Sukumar's illness, had to declare insolvency within three to four years of his death. The business was closed and the house sold off. Subinay Ray took a job as the editor of the journal of the Geological Survey of India and started to live in a rented house with his wife and son.

Suprabha Ray went with Manik to live with her younger brother Prasanta Kumar Das in his rented house in the Bhowanipur area of South Calcutta. Manik grew up with his cousins in the happy joint family.

Manik was educated in the Ballygunge Government High School and Presidency College, Calcutta, and graduated with Honours in Economics. His mother who was an excellent artist and needlewoman worked as a teacher in the Vidyasagar Banibhaban.

As my father was in the Bihar Civil Service he used to be posted at various places in the then province of Bihar and Orissa. Many of the places used to be considered to be 'health resorts'. Auntie used to pass her holidays with us in these places on her and Manik's holidays. As Manik was ten years younger than me most of his playing used to be with my younger sister Nalini. But I also remember a few occasions.

One was in 1926-27 when Manik was five years old, in Laheria Sarai, Darbhanga. I was reading a poem by Sukumar Ray to him in which the word 'convulsions' was used to describe how boatmen were convulsed with fear at the sight of turbulent waters and schoolboys were convulsed with fear at the sight of the cane in their teachers' hands and asked him whether he knew what 'convulsions' meant. He said 'Yes,' and immediately fell on the floor on his back rolling his wide open eyes and flailing with his arms and legs in such a horrific demonstration that we were shocked into shouting, 'O Manik ! Manik ! Please, please, stop.'

Another time, we had found a brown leatherette box which we felt looked like a doctor's bag, wrote 'Dr. Satyajit Ray, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.P.S.' on it and told him that he was a doctor and should give us medicines. He shook his head gravely — 'No, I won't be a doctor.'

'Then, what will you be when you grow up ?'

'I will be a filmmaker, go to Germany, learn to make films and make pictures for you to see.'

There was an obvious background to his idea of being a filmmaker. Sukumar Ray's cousins — Satyajit's uncles — Nitin Bose and Mukul Bose—were outstanding filmmakers of those days. And he may have got his idea of going to Germany from the fact that his uncle Subinay Ray had thought of starting an export–import business with Germany when the business of U. Ray and Sons was going into insolvency and had procured some samples of toys made in Germany with which we used to play.

He had learnt to take snapshots when he was very young and had been given a camera as a reward.

In about 1933-34 when he was around twelve years of age and studying in the Ballygunge Government High School, my father was posted at Hazaribagh and my aunt had come with Manik in the Puja holidays. One day, at a picnic at the Canary Hill, he was moving about taking photographs and asked me to stand still where I was. I wanted to change my position as I was standing with my back to the Sun, but he would have none of it. I came out all black when the photograph was printed, but Manik, nothing daunted, boasted — 'Just see how I can make a silhouette.'

He showed a remarkable sense of humour from his boyhood days. One of my cousins once called him a Desperado when he made a desperate bid to shoot a picture of the Bokaro Falls. Manik promptly called him Disgustedo, which perfectly described the expression on his face. Manik also had an incredible sense of music at that age and in our song games (with weird titles such as the Songs of Kerosene, the Songs of Honolulu etc.) he always won. Like his father he excelled in making nonsense rhymes.

Soon afterwards, my father and Manik's uncle bought contiguous plots of land off Rashbehari Avenue and built two houses side by side and the two families became next door neighbours. Manik and his cousins — his uncles' children and nieces and nephews — grew up together in a joint family.

We saw him grow up, go through school and college, study art for a short time at Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, and then join D.J. Keymer Ltd. as a commercial artist.

Manik and his cousins used to come to our house to play badminton together in our courts and we saw his special feelings for his cousin Vijaya — Monku — flower and culminate in their marriage afterwards.

As Manik used to love to eat a special meat dish cooked by me I used to ask him over whenever I prepared it. Once, perhaps in 1950, the English poet Stephen Spender was to have dinner with us and I had asked Manik to come. As I started to introduce him to Mr. Spender as 'Mr. Satyajit Ray, a commercial artist,' he hastily moved over to a position from where Mr. Spender could not see him, but I could. He shook his head from there in a negative gesture and imitated the action of operating a movie camera with the hands to mean — not an artist, but a filmmaker. It was then still five years to go before his first picture *Pather Panchali,* but his mind must have been full of the idea.

Manik and Monku went to Bombay to get married because marriage with a maternal cousin was invalid in Bengal, but valid there, and started to live with Manik's mother in a rented house after returning to Calcutta.

Manik had grown up and become a family man, but the child in him had not grown. Once when I had gone to see them in their Lake Temple Road flat, he told me, 'Come, let me introduce you to my friends,' and took me to the sitting room. The room was chock-full with young men of all descriptions chatting away among themselves. The funny thing was that Manik did not know the name of any of his so-called 'friends'. He made a general announcement, 'This is my elder sister'—and asked each of them — 'Who are you ?' 'What is your name ?' 'What do you do ?' The 'friends' had to introduce themselves.

Manik was thankfully proud when the Government of West Bengal presented him with a lift in his flat at Bishop Lefroy Road after his bypass surgery and insisted on taking me down in it when I visited him next and showing me the working of all the switches and buttons happily like a little boy with a mechanical toy.

He was very happy with his daughter-in-law when Sandip married and told me — 'She's wonderful!You know how she manages all my props!'

When his grandson was born, he proudly announced, 'The fourth generation of Upendrakishore.'

Manik had never grown up in my eyes: perhaps he had an eternal child in him like all geniuses. Remember Isaac Newton cutting a small door in his rabbit hutch for the little ones to come and go.

A Reminiscence

R. P. GUPTA

From the early forties, I was a regular visitor to the second-hand pavement bookstalls in Dharmatala Street. In those days one could get old, new, and even some antiquarian books and a large range of British and American magazines so cheap that even a chronically indigent man like myself could buy.

It was at these stalls that I used to see an enormously tall and slim young man with sculptured features, at least twice or thrice every week. Although we often stood side by side at the same stall picking up books and magazines we liked I never felt brave enough to talk to him. Some time later I came to know that he was the son of Sukumar Ray and the grandson of Upendrakishore, the two beloved men who had filled our childhood days, as they still do, with abounding joy through their stories, poems and pictures. I mention Ray's ancestry because even when Ray became famous many Bengalis referred to him as the remarkable son of a great father.

When Ray came into his own, many were intrigued by the fact that in his case the morning did not show the day. How come that so extraordinary a man had such an undistinguished academic record and showed no other talents except a remarkable musical ear? Although I have read accounts of his childhood days by many hands and his own, I, for one, have not been able to get a satisfactory answer to this question. A lack of interest in studies may be a part explanation but not the whole.

I later found that Dr. S. C. Sen Gupta, the distinguished teacher of English, had in his Bengali memoirs given an indication of Ray's academic excellence. On one occasion, he wrote, he had gone to meet his teacher, Kumud Bandhu Roy, who was then the head examiner for the intermediate examination in English of Calcutta University. At that time the marks obtained by students for the English essay papers were being entered into the register. He was happy to see that a student he admired had obtained high marks in it.

Dr. Sen Gupta hoped that the student will continue his studies in English which he did not. A little later he ran into him at a football match on the Calcutta Maidan and came to know that he was 'learning art.' He felt sad that such a brilliant boy was being ruined by crass stupidity. Then, Dr. Sen Gupta

revealed that the boy was Satyajit Ray. 'Heaven help my pedagogic wisdom,' were the words with which he ended his anecdote.

I want to mention another amusing incident of his student days which Ray told me when I told him Dr. Sen Gupta's observation. It was his first day in the Presidency College. The time for the class to begin had passed but the teacher had not arrived. Ray was quietly sitting at his bench while the other boys were making a big noise.

Suddenly, an aged and fierce figure invaded the room like a tornado and told the students to behave themselves. Everybody stood up, silent and frozen with fear. Then when the professor was on the point of leaving the room his eye caught what he thought was another bit of impertinence. Addressing Ray, he shouted, 'You there! Why are you standing on the bench?' An awed Ray said meekly that he was not. Realizing his error, the professor beat a hasty retreat. He was, however, hardly to be blamed. How could he possibly know that, of a fine morning, he would meet a Masai or a Watusi of all places in a Presidency classroom? The professor was none other than P. C. Ghosh, the legendary Shakespearian scholar, whose very name used to strike terror among the students.

In the Maidan encounter I have mentioned when Ray told Dr. Sen Gupta that he was learning art, he was referring to his brief stint in Santiniketan where he had gone at his mother's behest. As a matter of fact, left fatherless as an infant, Ray became what he was in no small way because of his mother's early guidance, and for her constant care, concern and love for him.

Santiniketan proved to have been a momentous break for the young Ray. Before going there Ray's upbringing was largely westernized. He had his conventional education with an English bias and was brought up on foreign films and western classical music. Besides, he picked up the rudiments of western art by reading art books and looking at reproductions of great western paintings.

At the Kala Bhavan in Santiniketan his study under Acharya Nandalal Bose and Binodebehari Mukherjee helped to give an Indian orientation to his mental outlook. Ray has described feelingly how Nandalal Bose helped to open his eyes to the Indian artistic traditions and aesthetics and how to look at man and nature with Indian eyes to transmute them into art. For example, Nandalal used to say that one must draw a tree starting from the bottom to the top as the tree grows and not from top to bottom as the Europeans do. Binodebehari, similarly, taught the basics of Indian artistic creativity. A grateful Ray later paid Binodebehari his tribute through his gem of a short film, *The Inner Eye.*

Satyajit Ray also came to know some others who made a deep impression on him in Santiniketan. One of them was Alex Aronson, a German scholar and music lover. The second was Prithwish Neogy, an aesthete and art pundit who later became Professor of Indian and Asian Art at the East and West University, Honolulu. Ray said that Neogy helped him in how to look at a painting.

On return to Calcutta from Santiniketan, Ray entered D. J. Keymer, then one of the biggest advertising agencies in India. The man who got him into advertising, in its pioneering days in India, was D. K. Gupta, popularly known as D. K. Although young, D. K. had then risen to become a key man in the British advertising agency by his expert knowledge of the techniques of production and printing and his skill to locate talents and build them into a team. D. K. also made his British bosses and clients realize that advertising to be effective in India must have an indigenous orientation. A matter which, despite over half-a-century's progress, many modern advertising practitioners still pay lip service to and do not practise.

As in Santineketan, in advertising too, Ray had the good luck to find himself in the company of a band of gifted men apart from D. K. Easily the most extraordinary among them was the dhoti-clad Annada Munshi. He was a versatile man. His abilities make a long list : artist, calligrapher, musicologist, a well-read man and a writer. Above all, he was a character with his delightful abilities and eccentricities which often made his white bosses a trifle unsure of themselves.

I have heard many interesting stories about Annada Munshi from Ray and others. Ray once said that in the Keymer studio he often had musical contests with Munshi as they worked. Sitting at opposite ends of the huge studio, one of them would whistle a bar from some well-known symphony while the other would respond with the succeeding bar, and the game would go on. Can anyone today imagine such a relaxed atmosphere and such musical knowledge in advertising agencies anywhere in the world? It is a pity that advertising now seems to be filled with eight–ulcer men pretending to get four–ulcer pay which, of course, is a damned lie, the pay I mean.

To turn to Munshi. He used to regard himself, by turns, as reincarnations of Jesus Christ or Sri Ramakrishna. Likewise he called Satyajit Ray Beethoven and his two sons Mozart and Aubrey Beardsley. Whatever may have been his reasons for such imaginings, these found fantastic expressions in his notebooks which he lovingly prepared. They contained examples of his superb calligraphy, illustrations and observations with flashes of insights on men and matters, nonsense and ironic comments, often against his British bosses. I have seen a number of such notebooks which Munshi gifted to Ray, O. C. Gangoly, and Raghunath Goswami to name a few. In fact Gangoly, most generously, gave me one such notebook which I treasure. How I wish that some publisher would come forward to print a volume with selections from his notebooks to provide a source of joy to readers as well as inspiration to today's designers.

Ray had joined Keymers as an assistant visualizer. It is a tribute to his skill and versatility as a graphic designer that in a few years' time he became the Company's art director.

Before I write on our coffee house sessions, I feel that I should touch upon Ray's role in book

designing. Shortly after Ray joined advertising, D. K with Mrs. Nilima Guha Thakurta had set up his publishing firm, Signet Press, and had made Ray his principal book designer.

In an article called *'Kājer Mānush D. K.'* ('D. K. the Doer') Ray wrote : 'There is no doubt that Signet Press had marked a departure in Bengali book designing. At the root of it was D. K.'s deep knowledge, tireless industry and his uncompromising perfectionism. According to D. K., the look of a book should be such that it should draw the attention of the buyers as it stood among a crowd of books displayed on a bookshop counter. D. K. also believed that the intrinsic character of any book should determine its format and its look.'

But, unbelievably enough, D. K. himself departed from his professed principles when Signet Press reprinted Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol* and *Ha ja ba ra la*. He made wholesale changes in the format and designing of the book for the worse. Indeed some of us felt that it was sheer sacrilege for anyone to make changes in the books whose total design was conceived and executed by the author himself to bring out fully their inherent nature. When we pointed this out to Ray, he said all these were done by D. K. against his will.

In fact in the article just referred to Ray put this on record without mincing words. 'It was my wish,' he wrote, 'that *Abol Tabol* and *Ha ja ba ra la* should be published as facsimiles of their original editions. But D. K. was wholly opposed to the idea and it was impossible for anyone to make him change his mind.' However D. K. later did what Ray and sensible people thought should be done and reprinted them largely in their original forms.

It is well known that Ray's Signet book covers were widely acclaimed for their excellence. But it is not common knowledge that they won high praise from top British artists, authors and bookmen. Here is what D. K. said in a letter he wrote from London in October 1953. 'It is good that I had the Signet covers with me all these days. I showed them to a number of people such as John Nash, Dorothy L. Sayers, Peter Norris of Denny's Book Shop, Norman Tucker of Sadler Wells, Christopher Transford of the Golden Cockerell Press and to one of H. G. Wells's sons. Everyone was effusive about them.'

From his college days, Satyajit was a film addict. Heaven knows how many Hollywood and British masterpieces he had seen over the years with the eye of a keen student. In 1950, Ray was sent to the UK for a few months' training by the management. This break came at the right time. Ray had decided some time earlier while designing a children's version of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's classic, *Pather Panchali*, to make a film on the novel. In fact, he had been busy preparing rough drafts of the script with illustrations of the shots of scenes as he had visualized them.

During his few months in England Ray got the opportunity to see many classic French, German, Russian and Italian neo-realist films. His exposure to these films sharpened his film sense and gave him fresh ideas about film forms and techniques.

At this point, I will go back a few years in time. In the early forties, Satyajit was singlemindedly pursuing his search to know as much as he could about the new cinema. Inspired by his zeal a number of like-minded young men gathered around him. I remember with what enthusiasm we sometimes met at his home to plan our future activities. As a first step it was decided to bring out a magazine with a bias towards the parallel cinema and new works by contemporary masters. As a matter of fact some articles, reviews and pictures were gathered. But money stood in the way. The magazine never came out.

Anyway, these early efforts were not in vain as they paved the way for the formation of the Calcutta Film Society in 1948, the first in India. Here again, Ray was the prime mover and Chidananda Das Gupta, Bansi Chandragupta and others were his collaborators. I too managed to hop on to the bandwagon; my membership card, as far as I can recall, bore the number 8. Sadly, the Society languished after a while and was revived in 1955 when its mouthpiece, *The Indian Film Quarterly,* made its appearance briefly. The Society, however, carried on with its shows of European films, discussions and meetings, two of which were addressed by visiting giants like Jean Renoir and John Huston.

Before the emergence of the film society movement we saw mostly Hollywood and British films through the normal exhibition channels. The more enthusiastic among us then tried to know about the history and development of the cinema from such books as Roger Manvell's *Film* and Paul Rotha's *The Film Till Now;* the periodic *Penguin Film Reviews* and from occasional copies of film magazines like *Sight and Sound* that fell into our hands. About the aesthetics and technical aspects of the new cinema, we had three classics, viz. Eisenstein's *Film Form* and *Film Sense* and Pudovkin's *Film Technique,* a copy of which I was lucky to pick up from an old bookstall. To strike a personal note, as a post-graduate student in 1940-41, I had read the script of the first part of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* in a British magazine, *Life and Letters Today,* at the Calcutta University Library. Interestingly, I later came to know that my encounter with the Eisenstein script through sheer serendipity took place before Ray had an occasion to look at it.

My familiarity with Ray grew from 1943. The years from 1943 to 1955 were for many of us among the happiest in our life when we unfailingly met at the smaller room (The Lords) of the Chowringhee Coffee House, every day except for the holidays. This room then drew a remarkable group of people comprising a number of top bureaucrats, political men of different shades, journalists and many interesting characters.

Between 1 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. our group of about ten regulars gathered at our *ādda*. Ray apart, the regulars included Kamal Kumar Majumdar, Prithwish Neogy, Chanchal Chatterjee, Ranen Roy, Kali Sadhan Das Gupta, Hari S. Das Gupta, Chidananda Das Gupta, Satyen Maitra, Subhas Ghosal, Kumar Mukherjee, Z. H. (Bunty) Khan, and an Irish ceramist, John ffrench.

As with any *adda,* at ours too, we discussed over cups of coffee all possible subjects one could think of. It will not be a hyperbole to say that these sessions provided a feast of reason and wit. As evidence, I quote here a few lines from a letter of 30 March 1992 that John ffrench wrote to me from Stockport, Massachusetts, where he now lives. 'I am enclosing a letter, for Satyajit Ray (which you may read of course). It was so nice to hear him on the radio (BBC World Programme) and, as I have said in my letter to him, it brought back floods of memories of our sessions in the coffee house, not to mention his wonderful films.'

I have dwelt at such length on the men who gathered at the coffee house because all of us, including Ray, benefited from our continuing and endless discussions over the years which helped us to clarify our ideas, learn new things, broaden our outlook and enrich our minds.

During all these years, Ray, in addition to his job and many other activities, was busy with his work on the script of *Pather Panchali*. I wonder if any other filmmaker in India till then gave a fraction of the attention that Ray devoted to scripting.

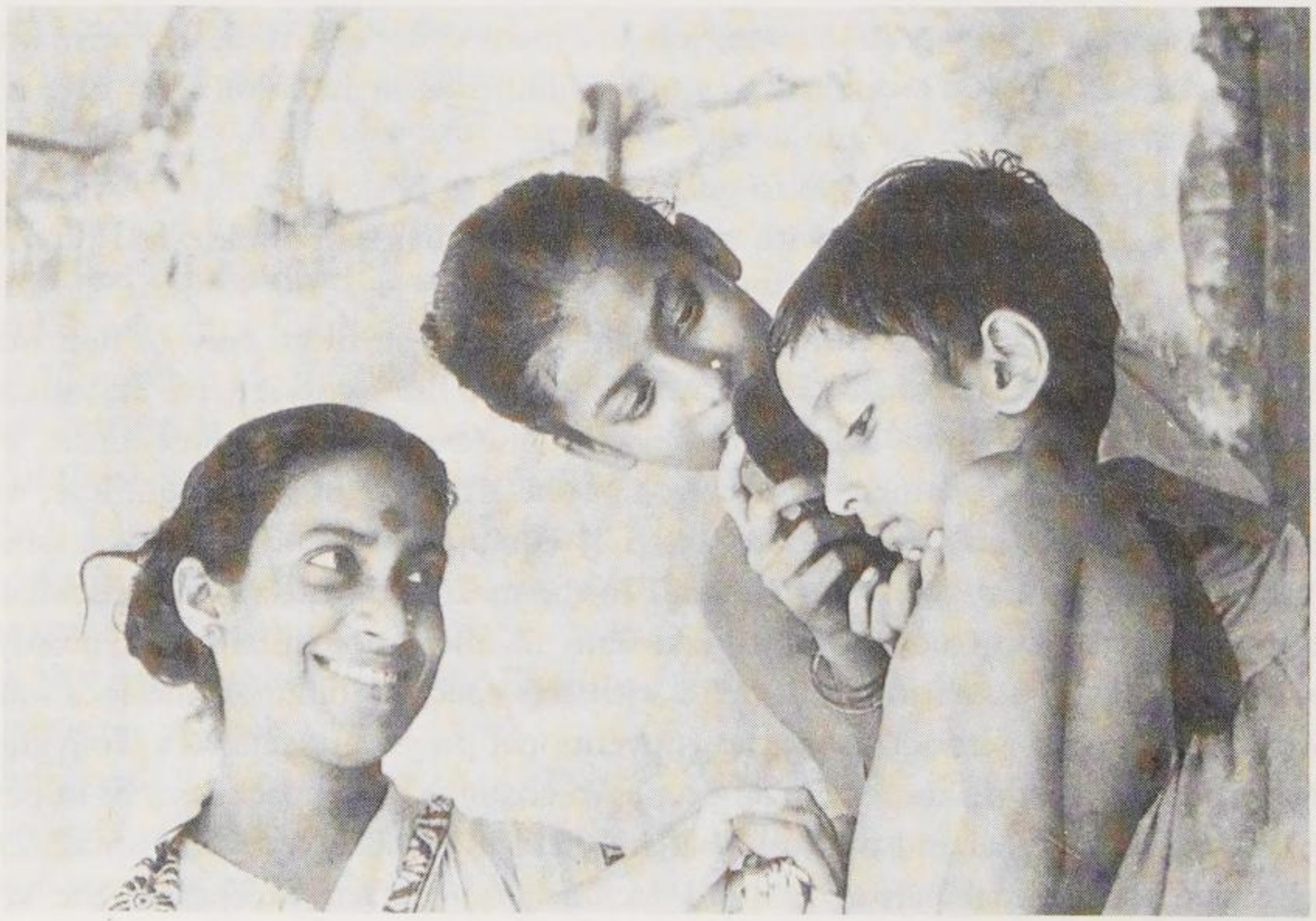
At last in 1951-52 Ray was finally able to get a producer to back his effort. It will be of interest to note here how the still unknown Ray with no practical experience in filming had prepared himself to take the plunge.

Ray had a wide knowledge in literature and the arts and also in the theory of film making. As a top graphic artist he was visually trained. His occasional forays into writing gave an indication of his power of expression through writing. He had also acquired a deep knowledge of music, both Indian and Western. So, if the film were a medium in which all the arts were in saturation, Ray, we felt, with his luminous intelligence and impeccable taste was fully equipped to handle it in a masterly fashion.

In 1952, the shooting of *Pather Panchali* began. In the making of it, Ray adopted what I may call a non-Euclidean approach in the context of Indian films till then. For instance, he mostly opted for outdoor shooting except for some interior scenes with sets specially built on the location by his art director Bansi Chandragupta without using the conventional props and sets of a Tollygunge studio. Similarly, he eliminated stagey make-ups, incongruities in costumes and anachronisms in period details and cut out all the clichés, visual and musical, that still held the Indian cinema in thrall. Daringly, he also dispensed with professional performers and technicians. In fact, except for the veterans like Chunibala, Reba Debi, Kanu Bandyopadhyay and Tulsi Chakraborty, the rest of his cast and crew were

new, including the cameraman, Subrata Mitra. Behind the whole enterprise and inspiring the whole team Ray served as the conductor of an orchestra or as a generalissimo, planning and directing every move in all aspects of production.

I need not go here into the oft-repeated story as to how his producer got cold feet and vanished after the shooting had progressed for a while and how he was rescued from this seemingly hopeless pass through the intervention of Dr. B. C. Roy who was then the all-powerful Chief Minister of West Bengal. Ray had a free hand in shooting and the film was finished smoothly. But there had cropped up a matter which though seems comic in retrospect must have then given Ray a bit of headache. It was reported that Dr. Roy after hearing the story had suggested that Satyajit should change its ending. Instead of Harihar's flight to Benaras from his village, Ray should show him getting involved in the Government's newly launched community development movement and live happily in his village ever after. Ray averted this disaster by simply going ahead with the shooting as planned and finally all ended well. For, by that time, as Ray had rightly guessed, Dr. Roy had forgotten all about his suggested ending.



The Family of Man

During the first and second spells of shooting of *Pather Panchali* Ray used to come to the Coffee House from time to time with stills from his work in progress. Those simple black and white photographs charmed us by revealing the marvellous beauty of our Bengal village scenes and the haunting and sensitive faces of his actors and actresses.

One of these stills showed Apu being dressed up by his mother Sarbajaya and his sister Durga for his first day at school. It turned out to be possibly the most widely exhibited Indian photograph ever. It was one of the 503 pictures from 68 countries that Edward Steichen chose from out of three million negatives he had gathered to mount the Museum of Modern Art's (MOMA) exhibition entitled *The Family of Man* in 1955. This great exhibition was seen by millions of people as it went round the world. Along with our friends, I visited the exhibition a number of times when it was shown at the Eden Gardens, Calcutta.

During the shooting of *Pather Panchali* Ray used to invite us to see rushes from time to time. I cannot describe the thrill we felt every time we made the long journey to the auditorium of the Tollygunge studio where the rushes were shown. We thus got advance glimpses into many sequences that became classics in modern cinema. Sequences featuring the little Durga before the birth of Apu, the older Durga and Apu rushing through the autumn *kash* flowers, munching sugarcane, to catch their first glimpse of a railway train that Durga sadly failed to see, Durga dancing in joy as she gets drenched in the first rain of the season, the terrifying scene of her death and the sad sequence of Harihar's homecoming after Durga's death. These and other sequences hauntingly beautiful, even without words, sounds and music, revealed to us the poetry of the ordinary things of life and greasy domesticities whose vividness was blunted to us through familiarity. Indeed all these made us realize that a movie classic was in the making. Lest these words sound like a suspicious boast, let me add that John Huston was speechless after seeing about 4,000 feet of these rushes in 1955 of which I was an eyewitness. In fact Huston was so impressed after he saw these rushes that he persuaded Monroe Wheeler, then the Director of Graphic Arts of MOMA, to show it as a curtain-raiser for the India Exhibition which it was planning to hold in 1955, if, of course, the film was ready by then. In fact that was how a copy of *Pather Panchali* was rushed to New York for its first ever show in MOMA to a select audience outside India. It seems amazing that the film, even without subtitles, so overpowered the sophisticated audience that at the end of its screening they gave a standing ovation to it for five minutes.

A short time after this private screening *Pather Panchali* was poised for release in Calcutta. I remember the day before its release, Ray came to the Coffee House at lunchtime. We could see from his face and talk that his mind was tempered with a fine feeling of nervousness. His film, at long last,

was going to make its debut before the unpredictable Bengali public. Finally, as he stood up to leave, we wished him good luck and saw him walking out of the Coffee House and, as it turned out later, walk into movie immortality.

Among all the accolades and awards *Pather Panchali* won all over the world, there were a few dissenting voices. The first adverse foreign comment came from no less a person than Francois Truffaut, a leader of the *nouvelle vague* in films. On seeing *Pather Panchali,* he was alleged to have walked out of the show with the comment, 'pad, pad, pad through the paddy fields.' I have said 'alleged' because Truffaut later denied making it. The second criticism came much much later, surprisingly after *Pather Panchali* had been recognized as a classic. Bosley Crowther, the formidable film critic of the *New York Times,* saw the film after it was released in a New York art theatre in 1982 and said that the film was so bad that it would barely pass as a rough cut in Hollywood. But after *Pather Panchali* had an uninterrupted run of over eight months in New York, Crowther, on seeing it again, substantially changed his initial view of the film.

In Calcutta, I should like to cite two amusing reactions to *Pather Panchali*, if only for the record.

Kamal Kumar Majumdar on seeing the film had said that he found it contained many mistakes about the Bengali Hindu way of village life because the *'bramho'* Ray's ignorance. He also sarcastically said that in the whole film he found only one short sequence visually exciting. The one which showed Apu and Durga following Chinibas, the sweetmeat seller, as he trudged through the village to the sounds of the *gubgubi.* All this cut Ray to the quick. In an article in *Samatat* years later, he wrote, 'I had by then realized that I did not have it in me to make a film on village life that will please Kamal-Babu.'

Annada Munshi's comment on *Pather Panchali* was however delightful in its subtle witticism. 'I have found everything in your film,' he wrote to Ray, 'but where has the *āmantir venpoo* gone ?' By referring to the title of the children's version of *Pather Panchali* which Ray had designed for Signet earlier, Munshi had indulged in a marvellous word play. He had, first, punned *amanti* with Amati which with Stradivarius and Guarnerius formed the trinity of the world's greatest violins ever made in Cremona in Italy. This was because Ray did not use the violin in the background music of *Pather Panchali.* Secondly, Munshi by referring to 'amati', a down-to-earth Italian phrase meaning 'I love you', hinted that there was no element of romance in *Pather Panchali* either.

The time has now come to round up this rambling piece with the question that apart from Ray the filmmaker, how many 'other Rays' did he embody in his person? This in plain words refers to Ray's amazing versatility. First, let us take Ray the writer. In recent Bengali literature, Ray's exceptional abilities as a storyteller, inherited from his father and grandfather, have given him a unique position. A pioneer in Bengali 'Sci-fi', Ray will live on as the creator of Professor Shonku, a lovable, absent-

minded scientific inventor. Similarly, in the not so rich genre of Bengali detective fiction, Ray has emerged as the latest notable practitioner with his novels and short stories. The year 1995 marked the thirtieth year of the appearance of his sleuth, Prodosh Mitra, better known to his readers as Feluda. Then, of course, there is Lalmohan Ganguly alias Jatayu, the ever optimistic and cheerful writer of sensational mystery novels, the most delightful character that Ray has created. Ever since the appearance of his detective and sci-fi works, they have continued to occupy the top positions in the Bengali bestseller lists, year after year. A key to his popularity as a writer was revealed by Ray himself when he said that he had earned far more money from his books than from his films.

Apart however from monetary success, how much importance did Ray attach to his writings?'I consider myself,' he once wrote, 'primarily a filmmaker and secondarily a writer for young people.' This self-assessment is no doubt correct but I should like to add a comment to it. It is that like his father's writings his books too are equally enjoyed by both children and adults. This apart, Ray also made two feature films, *Joi Baba Felunath*, and *Sonar Kella*, based on his detective novels.

Some of Ray's stories, mainly featuring animals, were published under the title *Stories* in England and France in 1987 and won high praise. The London *Times*, for instance, called the collection 'at once fantastic, realistically humane and occasionally frightening . . .' In France, *Stories* won the award for the best book by a foreign author in the year when it appeared in French. Ray's main work on films, *Our Films Their Films*, had also made a big impact, here and abroad.

Secondly, as has been already stated, there was Ray, the master graphic artist. A selection of his graphics (advertisements, posters, bill board designs, calligraphy, book and magazine covers, English typeface designs which won a top American award, sketches for costumes, sets and film shots) were for a time displayed in an exhibition called *The Other Ray* at the Village Art Gallery in Delhi in 1990. While discerning critics and viewers praised their excellence, Ray wrote diffidently about them in the exhibition catalogue : 'I have never taken my graphic work seriously,' he said, 'and certainly never considered it as worthy of being exposed to the public.' Needless to say, these words showed Ray's characteristic modesty as a man.

This brings me to write a few words on Ray as a man and a friend which I do on the basis of my knowledge of him spread over four and half decades.

As a filmmaker Ray had always remained ruthlessly uncompromising in his artistic principles. More, I know of two occasions when Indira Gandhi had extended invitations to Ray to dinner at Delhi. But Ray both times had expressed his inability to attend because they clashed with his shooting schedules. In real life he was self-effacing, gentle, humorous and filled with a sense of child-like wonder which he never lost and which played no small part in his creativity.

Over the years, despite his awesome fame, Ray had always remained directly accessible to even unknown callers. He did his own enormous volume of correspondence, attended to his phone calls and other routine jobs without the aid of a secretary.

Ray's way of living and his relationships with people remained basically simple, warm and concerned as they were when he was young and unknown. He dressed himself in simple, spotlessly white kurta and pyjamas, rode in an humble Ambassador car, spent his leisure reading, listening to music, watching movie classics on the video, and enjoying the company of his family and friends.

Talking about his friends, Ray often said that his busy schedule did not give him enough time to meet them as in the earlier days. But whenever a friend called on him, he behaved as though he had all the time in the world for him. He never failed to invite his close friends over the phone himself to the private previews of his new films whenever they were arranged. Finally, he always gave them his help, sometimes even at his own personal inconvenience.

One other thing before I end. I refer to the great love that Ray bore for Calcutta, the much maligned city where he was born, lived, worked, and died. Ray was, of course, fully conscious of Calcutta's physical ugliness and horrors and the many faults of his fellow Bengalis. But nothing could lure him away from it. He was fascinated by the city's hidden beauties, its cultural and intellectual vitality, its warmth and humanism which inspired his creativity. Once, when someone was overdoing a bit the business of Calcutta's poverty and squalor, Ray had gently reminded him that one could make films of life in Calcutta with its joys and sorrows but it was difficult for one to do so on the affluent and sanitized city such as Geneva.

Satyajit Ray died on 23 April 1992. But his films will continue to instruct and delight generations to come.

Those Kala Bhavan Days

DINKAR KOWSHIK

My first encounter with Manik was in the Kala Bhavan hostel. I was allotted a seat in the same room as his, and I had to introduce myself as a fresher from Pune, Bombay. My ignorance of Bengali was lightened because I had Sanskrit as my second language in college. I discovered that Bengali was full of Sanskrit words and idioms. Anyway I had no recourse but to fall back on English for my routine communication. For Manik that was just a normal course. He did not try to teach me Bengali, and I had to pick it up by listening to the continual dialogues that went around in the hostel precincts. Manik, just a slim youth of nineteen, was full six feet three, was always clad in white punjabi and pyjamas, always meticulously clean. He rarely joined in sports like volleyball or football. He rarely grouped in the game of cards or other pastimes of student days. He walked with firm measured steps either towards the studios, the museum, the library or the kitchen hall and was never seen ambling around aimlessly. Usually he would make week-end trips to Calcutta and return with a rich harvest of new novels, by André Gide, Louis Aragon, Virginia Woolf, or a set of gramophone records of Mozart, Bach or Beethoven, and some fresh English journals. The hostel verandah was usually our drawing room. Here Prithwish, Sakalasuriya, a student from Ceylon, myself and Muthuswamy would gather and talk endlessly about the current world scene of art. In these talks Prithwish usually took the centre-stage. The discussions were rambling and endless; names like Paul Klee, Brancusi, Kandinsky. Juan Miro, Picasso, Salvador Dali and Cezanne were used as sterling currency. The Indian artists whose names graced the list were but few. Binodebehari, Nandalal, Ramkinkar, Rabindranath, Abanindranath and for a change, Jamini Roy. No artist from Bombay could find favour in this elite list. They were just crass imitationists who painted to please customers instead of themselves! I myself was not particularly enamoured of the Bombay school. I had in fact given up the J.J. curriculum in Pune, to take my lessons under Nandalal, in Kala Bhavan. I never felt local patriotism for Bombay in this respect. So our intellectual travelogue in the art world was spanned by the classical art of India, and the modern European masters, and some far eastern masters like Sotatsu, Korin, and the Tang and Sung painters. My contribution to these talks was in just rapt attention to the sallies of the various participants. During my college days, I had read

books by Herbert Read, Clive Bell, Wilensky, Bernard Berenson and Ananda Coomaraswamy. These were my mental ballast. These were familiar names to me, but I had seldom come across a band of select students who were excited by such artists as Georges Braque, Emile Nolde, Sotatsu, Cezanne, or Hokusai. But when it came to a musical meet over the gramophone I had the chance of audience participation. Once he had brought Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony and was listening to it with rapture. Afterwards he attempted to enthuse me by elucidating its vital passages. This was my first introduction to western music. Having listened to some Indian musicians like Abdul Karim Khan, Alladiya Khan, Faiyaz Khan, Buwa Vaze, and Sawai Gandharva in Pune and Bombay, I had some insight into our own music, and I have my impressions with characteristic enthusiasm. I used to play on the flute and I sometimes explained the structure of various ragas to Manik. He was very receptive and once when I was improvising on the flute, he exclaimed with surprise, 'But that sounds like a Bach Fugue! Amazing!'

After such musical interludes and forays in art history, we came closer to each other and usually moved as friends. I had seen Manik being choosy about his companions, avoiding boisterous comrades in the studios or library. We often went together on sketching outings. Once we were in the Uttarayan drawing a graceful peacock. The elegant gait of the bird in its regal movements was keenly observed and drawn with deft lines. Manik was very swift in his observations and his lines were rapier-like incisive. Just in the midst of its dancing movements the bird turned its back and defecated. Manik commented with a smile, 'Beauty had a beast behind it!'

The new session began on the first of July 1941. There was an air of anxiety on all the faces in the *ashram*. Gurudeva Rabindranath was seriously ill and every day some doctor or kabiraj would examine him and emerge out of the Udayan house with doubt writ large on the face. In the third week of July Rabindranath was to be taken to Calcutta for surgery. He asked his associates to take him around the *ashram* for what was to be the last look at his dream of peace. His favourite armchair was hauled up in the bus and Rabindranath was lifted on to the chair. His close associates who had nursed him day and night—Nandita, Biswarup, Masoji and others—were beside him in the vehicle. Rabindranath was taken around, through the paths of the Shālbithi, the Gourprāngan and the Cheenabhavan and of course around the Chhātimtalā. Rabindranath wore a wan smile, a tired and distant look; his eyes were in dialogue with the trees, bowers and children of long companionship. The bus then moved to the Bolpur station and he was taken by a special coach to Howrah.

The daily bulletins on Rabindranath's health reached Santiniketan; the air was now tense with premonition. On 22 Shravan (8 August) news came in the early hours that the poet was sinking. Mallikji announced his fears and said that those who wished to pay their last homage may proceed to Calcutta. Manik came into the room in haste. He asked, 'Dinu, let us go to Jorasanko. It may be our last chance!'

We left without any change of clothes or breakfast, as it was train time. When we reached Jorasanko we were in the middle of a surging mass of people. We could reach the closed iron grill of the sprawling house only with difficulty. Somebody from Santiniketan noticed us and tried to open up an entry. Some local wag remarked, 'Oh, the *ashram* batu-ra eschen!' To call Manik 'Batu' was an untimely joke, and he hissed in anger. But before we could enter, the pall-bearers came down the stairs and the stretcher which was decorated with dignity and taste by Nandalal and Suren Kar appeared on the ground step. Immediately the crowd took over the pall, which travelled from shoulder to shoulder in a fraction of a minute to a hundred yards and more. The restless crowd of admirers were competing with each other in a riotous grab for hair from the Poet's beard and head. It was all gruesome. Manik in a mute rage said, 'Patriotic vultures of culture are having a field day! Come Dinu, we go homewards.'

Though it was the month of Shravan, it was a cloudless day and the midday sun was relentless. We walked all the way to the Triangular Park in Ballygunge. When we reached home Suprabha-*mā simā* was surprised to see us. She guessed the situation. She said, 'Go, and first bathe. I will get you lunch ready, in half an hour.' Manik spoke with bitter regret about the crowd's behaviour. We had a quick lunch, half an hour's siesta and then back to Howrah, to catch the Bolpur train.

SATYAJIT RAY

9/10/91

Dear Dinu,

Your piece in Ekshan is a delight. 50 year old memories came flooding back as I read it. You forgot to mention one thing though — our epic 16 mile walk from Santiniketan to Ranigarh during the August disturbances. Do you recall that we missed the train to Calcutta by two minutes & had to spend the night in the platform waiting for the train the next day?

I hope all is well with you & Purbasa. With all good wishes, / Manik

A warm letter to Dinkar Kowshik – filling in details for a memoiral piece

In Santiniketan, after a fortnight of sad atmosphere, our life as students went on in its normal gear. We used to go in a group of three or four to the refectory at 12.15 noon, and 8 p.m. in the evenings. Usually our stomachs gave earlier warnings and Manik used to refer to Chaplin's *Gold Rush* where the hungry Chaplin sits in the doctor's waiting room with others, and his hungry stomach makes a gurgling sound, and the pet dog of the lady, sitting next to him, barks furiously at the sound. Our walk from hostel to kitchen was a promenade walk. We went along in the best of our clothes. One of the girls, who admired Manik, walked a few steps ahead, in a self-conscious way. This made her body movements on the hind, look ridiculous. Manik was quite amused. One day he made a large cartoon on a full drawing sheet in colour – it resembled that particular girl – and pasted it on the *chaity* which is in front of the kitchen. It had the desired effect. From that day the 'walk' disappeared.

Manik usually maintained his reserve. His brisk walk and deep bass voice made him appear rather exclusive. He sketched in his book all and sundry. One day I found him sketching from a photograph of a Karla *mithuna*, the man with his hand around the waist of a heavy-bosomed maid. I said, 'The woman is a perfect specimen of womanhood.' He quickly turned the pages of the book and showed me a sculpture from Ellora, of Yamuna the river goddess. The figure was lithe, elegant, long and pliant. 'I like this specimen better!' In later years in his films he evinced the same preference when choosing his female characters.

In one of our rendezvous on the hostel verandah, Prithwish suggested that we could as well go to Ajanta, Ellora and other places during Christmas and skip the usual Kala Bhavan excursion to Dumka. I was from Maharashtra and had already visited some of these centres. So I was given the charge to draw an itinerary. When we spoke to Mastermoshai Nandalal, he readily agreed. He armed us with two letters 'To Whomsoever it may concern', signed and stamped on the official Visva-Bharati letterhead, one by him and the other by Rathindranath Tagore. Those days the railways used to issue round tour tickets for one month and one had to follow a particular route covering the northern and central parts of India. The route had Howrah as the starting point. Then Allahabad, Jabbalpur, Talgaon, Manmad, Bombay, Baroda, Gwalior, Jhansi, Khajuraho, Allahabad and back to Howrah. Time 33 days. Price Rupees nineteen and eight annas only, per ticket, non-transferable, non-refundable. Thus equipped with travel papers, maps, sketchbooks, the railway guide, and a few travel accessories like a *satranji*, a *kambal*, and extra pairs of clothes, the gang of four entrained for Howrah. Manik and Prithwish were to collect their baggage from their homes. Muthu was a jolly lithe five footer. He spoke in the manner of a P.G. Wodehouse character. He equipped himself with his Rolleiflex camera. He was the official photographer on this tour. Every time things went wrong he would remark, 'Numbskull is short of gray matter!'

At Manik's place *Māsimā* was quite excited. She supervised the bedding gear—*toshak*, *rajai*, blanket,

bedroom slippers, four pairs of clothes and a small medicine chest all rolled in a hold-all.

We got into the train at Howrah late in the evening. As soon as the train moved we realized we were in a military compartment. The Sikh soldiers created a stir, but when we assured them that we were getting down at the next station, and that we were students on a study tour, they relented. We were approaching Dhanbad or some such wayside station. The ticket checker woke us up : 'Tickets please.' Manik pulled out our four round-tour tickets, and brandished them. The officer looked with great interest and scrutiny and after about five minutes he came to the conclusion, 'No, you cannot travel by this train. Your route is via Janghai and you have to change the train at the next stop.' Muthu brought out the railway map, and Prithwish brandished the railway guide and said, 'This train touches Jalgaon, and so this is our train.' The officer nodded, 'No'. Then I just winked at Muthu and advised him to speak in Malayali. I opened my barrage of Marathi. Prithwish spoke legal Bengali and Manik went on exclaiming, 'Abominable confusion! Please leave us alone to our Jalgaon. Janghai has no relation to Jalgaon! and you know that as well as we do.' With four different tongues wagging hoarse at the checker, he handed the tickets back and quietly left the compartment! When we reached Allahabad it was morning. We had tea, and shared the excellent snacks Prithwish had got packed in his knapsack. By about four in the afternoon we reached Jalgaon. We hurriedly got down at the station. Now, I was on home ground! I could now talk in Marathi dialect and make myself understood.

We needed no coolie but we had to seek their expertise for finding out the timing of the bus for Ajanta. After some enquiry we found out about the bus leaving for the Fardapur dak bungalow at 5.30 p.m. The winter days were short; it was getting dark. We hurriedly made some purchases at the bus stand—a few loaves of bread, butter, dozens of Bhusaval bananas, papayas, among other things. The bus took about two hours. When we reached the dak bungalow it was around 8 o'clock. We were viciously hungry and tired. The dak bungalow was dark. After some shouts and howls the chowkidar appeared with a lantern. He was initially reluctant to open the rooms. But our two letters with seals and rubber stamps were impressive and did the trick. I cajoled him and said these were guests from the lāt-sāhib of Calcutta and it would be a disaster if they were denied the shelter, which was anyway totally unoccupied. He grudgingly opened a large room, in which there was no light and only one wooden platform about 8' x 8', for a bed. We begged him to provide us with drinking water. He brought an earthern *surahee* with fresh water from a nearby spring. He cautioned us that he was in no position to provide us with meals, and we would have to fend for ourselves. That night we had our bread, butter and bananas. But Manik detested all kinds of fruit or raw uncooked things. Luckily there was some *dālmoot* left from our Calcutta snack pack. Manik ate a few slices with butter and *dālmoot*, and had one lozenge for his dessert. We were happy with our B. B. sandwiches and a tumbler

of fresh water from the mountain stream. When we spread our beds, the granites of Ajanta were in tune with our stoney slumber on the wooden platform.

Next morning we refreshed ourselves. The morning business was performed behind the thorny bushes. After a brief conversation with the chowkidar, we learnt that the caves were five miles by the road and three by footpath through the pea-nut fields. There was a tea-stall at the foot of the caves. The caves remained open between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. for visitors. By about 7.30 we started our march to the caves. My facility with the local language was very opportune. A few directions from the wayside farmers helped us to reach the caves. There at the tea-stall we ordered a good heavy breakfast of bread slices, omelettes of two fresh eggs and a large tumbler of tea sweetened with *gur*. The tea-man promised a glass of milk by about noon when his milkman brought him his supply from the village. All this would cost us one rupee and four annas! We would still be saving two rupees and twelve annas out of our daily allowance of four rupees (at the rate of one rupee per head). We felt we were having a princely time. But we had no marketing facility. The bus driver from Jalgaon sometimes obliged us with loaves and fruits if we paid him some extra. We sometimes coaxed him to bring biscuits and sundry snacks for us.

When the caves opened, the keeper of the Archaeological Survey of the Hyderabad Nizam was in receipt of the letter from Visva-Bharati. He was awaiting us. But there was hardly anything to be done except opening the door of the caves. The dank smell was heightened by the droppings of bats and birds. It was depressingly dark inside. Prithwish was quite prepared for the situation. He had brought a large white bedsheet which we spread on the floor and a large mirror provided by the keeper reflected the sunlight on this sheet. Gradually the frescos started emerging from the darkness. Now was the stage set for Prithwish's discourse on Indian art. He pointed to an unusual aspect. The perspective with which we have been made familiar by camera and examples of western art was a receding one, technically called isometric. The closer forms of gods and living beings were large and the distant ones appeared smaller; and the gradual recession was established as a usual experience. But here we were witnessing an emerging perspective and a perspective which was psychophysical. This is based on the human consciousness of reality as felt by our minds. The dark background was our psyche. From this darkness emerged the forms of Padmapani Bodhisattva, the black princess, the trees, the monkeys, the brahman beggar and crystallized blocks representing the earth. The forms appeared as it were self-illumined; there was no external source of light and hence there were no cast shadows. The colours were either local or symbolic and no attempt was made to approximate visual illusion.

The thrill of witnessing these ancient paintings and sculptures was frankly overpowering. Muthu and Prithwish were busy with their selection, arranging the proper reflected light and clicking endlessly

to document the memorable passages. We could not take in all the grand pieces unravelled before us at one go. Manik and myself had to come out of the caves to refresh our breath and refill our energies.

By noon we were tired climbing up and down the various caves and reconnoitring the hill ranges. I decided to take a plunge in the deep pool that had formed at the concave end of the range.

During the rainy season, a cascade of waterfall would descend there. Now only a trickle was visible; the water transparent, cold and inviting. I was fond of swims. Prithwish and Manik would see my antics and remark, 'You are fish and monkey all rolled into one!' Later we would descend to our tea shop for our munch and lunch. He would prepare hot *chapatis* and some *alu-subji*, which was full of chillies. He could not refrain. He remarked, 'Unless your tongue gets a kick from the hot food, you cannot digest!' — to which Manik would rejoin, 'Yes my friend, digestion is not our problem. We fear the outcome of the next morning!'

Back in the dak bungalow I was the official cook, Manik was vegetable cutter, Prithwish and Muthu official cleaners of the kitchen mess. I used to roll a few *rotis* from flour and make some *tarkāri* of potatoes and onions. Every day there would be a long quarrel about the proportion of salt. So I gave up adding salt and offered it on platter. Each could mix according to taste. Our daily visits to the caves lasted for about a week and our sketchbooks were filled with odd notes taken from the frescos. In the farthest cave in Ajanta, there was one gigantic reclining sculpture of the Buddha on his death-bed. Two tiny disciples mourning at the side had a simple dignity. No details, no facial expression. The sorrow was profound in the very bending posture of the two distraught human beings in mourning.

The flying *apsaras* and *gandharvas* with their musical instruments were sketched several times. Manik was quite keen on depicting the upward buoyancy of the figures that had physical body yet flying in the air with ease and casual grace. We were conscious of the brief time we could spare for Ajanta; hardly a week was at our disposal amd we could not afford the luxury of working in colours. We decided to move on to Ellora. Manik was explaining to the bus driver, 'Ellora is our next destination.' The driver had not heard of Ellora and his face was just a large question mark. I overheard the talk and interrupted, 'Ellora in the local dialect is 'Verul'. The Englishmen could not pronounce 'L' and they turned it into Ellora!' The bus took us to Verul over the range of hills and left us at the bus stand. A little enquiry was enough to take us to the two room hutment, one of which was filled with digging implements, ropes, and tins. The other room was supposed to be a lodging space. We swept it clean and spread our beds. The place was infested with lice and the first night was an ordeal. In the morning we talked to the Chowkidar, who had promised us tea, about our plight. He quietly went out and brought some plant. He burnt it inside the rooms making a hell of a smoke. From that day we were spared of lice and bugs.

The village shopkeeper was quite enterprising. He arranged for us bread and butter, and some local fruits like guavas and bananas from the nearby Daulatabad town. He also provided us with a stock of candles for our use in the nights. We had to attend to our morning toilets in the open fields on our way to the caves wherever muddy pools were available. At the mouth of the Kailash temple complex we were stunned and left breathless. One huge mountain stood transformed into sculpture. It was not architecture. It was a veritable monument of granite that emerged and receded as gods and goddesses, lions and elephants, as demons and floral pediments, all in a tumult. The first encounter with Kailash left us in silence and awe. We had never witnessed anything of such inspiring magnificence and magnitude. Manik folded up his hands and said, 'Today no drawing, I will just see, and see, and see unsatiably the vision.' Prithwish and Muthu found a veritable treasure for the camera. Ravana shaking the Kailash while Parvati reclines on the shoulders of Shiva as a refuge, Narasimha, Ganga, Yamuna, all those sculptures which we had seen and studied in textbooks appeared here in situ and with such arresting reality.

The whole Ellora complex is in a continuous range of granite hills. The caves are scooped wherever suitable grain was struck. There were Brahminical caves along with the Buddhist and Jain ones. This coexistence was remarkable. From thereafter we drew, we sketched and felt extremely rewarded by the experience.

After almost a week long stay and study we made a move and made a shot whistle stop at Aurangabad. There too we ferreted more caves, made drawings, took photographs, and then entrained for Manmad. We had to join the main G.I.P. rail route for the official tour route to Bombay. We had no interest in the squalid sprawling city of Bombay, but we had to be there for our Elephanta and Karla caves.

In Bombay we took a steam launch at the Gateway of India in the morning, and reached Elephanta, locally called Gharapuri. The launch docked at a low pier, and we had to take a mile long walk to reach the caves. After a climb of above hundred steps we reached the main cave hall, elegant with large panels and pillars. The main Maheshmurti — popularly known as Trimurti — stood in the main hall, glorious in its grace and tranquility. As one's eyes moved from face to face, there lurked a vision of a breathing form. The enormous sizes of the three faces — about twenty feet in height — did not appear oversize. They were just normal. In the cave setting they were divine. Muthu and Prithwish clicked several photographs at different timings of the day. They felt the camera an inadequate gadget to record the veritable aura of solitude and grandeur. There were several other panels, like the Shiva-Parvati wedding, and many more on the Shiva legend. After several hours of study and drawing, Manik folded his book with a remark, 'The human hand would need some non-human inspiration to attain such felicity!'

We returned from Elephanta after two days of intensive studies. Then we took a trip to Karla. By train we travelled to a station called Malvali, and from there we walked about two miles to the caves. The cave has a main *chaitya* hall. On the entrance facade wall there were the famous *mithunas* standing in their restrained gaiety. Manik reminded me of my favourites, 'Dinu, you can now have your choice, they are all in your line of preference! I have left my Yamuna in the Ellora forest!' After Karla, we crossed back and went in the opposite direction, some five miles; walking was the only means of locomotion. At Bhaja the low bas-relief of Surya with its seven carriers was lit by the fresh light of the morning sun. It was an exhilarating experience. After some notings of the visuals at the caves we returned to Bombay. In Bombay for practical reasons of cost we had to seek shelter individually with our relatives and friends and had to lodge separately.

Our tour was already three weeks old, and had only another ten days out of our stipulated 33 days. Once again we jumped on the train bound for Gwalior.

At Gwalior we were guests of Mr. Rajwade who was long associated with the Archaeological Survey of Gwalior state. It was biting cold, it being the early part of January in Northern India, and our host provided us with beds and warm blankets. He had known Nandalal Bose and spoke with warmth about their earlier visits to Bagh and Gwalior. When we asked about the Bagh caves, he laughed and said, 'Bagh has lost all paintings — they are simply non-existent. You should see the copies done by Nandalal and Asitkumar. They are here in the state museum. They are the only extant proof of Bagh's past glory!' We were sorely disappointed and our visit to the state museum was just another item on our itinerary. These copies we have seen in their versions on the Kala Bhavan walls, and also in the book published by the State Government. Thanking him profusely for the hospitality we took leave of Mr. Rajwade and took the next available train en route Khajuraho, via Jhansi and Harpalpur. At Harpalpur we had to change for Chatterpur and then on by bus to Khajuraho.

When we reached Khajuraho it was pitch dark — not a soul in sight. We ate whatever we had in our backpack. There was no shelter, no dak bungalow, no *dharmasala*. The best available shelter was under the long overhanging cornices of the temples. We spread our beds and slept lengthwise in a long line along the parapet. The cold was piercing our bones and here for once we felt we had reached the nadir.

In the morning when the Sun rose we clambered up and found a wayside tea shop, which remained open only during the day. We ordered fresh milk, some breakfast of *chapatis* and *alu-ki-subji*.

The Khajuraho sculptures were of the early medieval era. The erotic ones were quite exciting for our youthful stage, but Prithwish considered these too sleek and facile. Ellora, Karla or Elephanta were strong, vital, monumental and magnificent.

Those of Khajuraho were decorative all over encrustations and served as a vibrant texture of the

temple surface. The Markandeya Temple was one of the prominent ones, and we studied and sketched it thoroughly. Our round tour ticket limit was four days away. Manik declared one early morning that he had had enough of the *roti* and *alu-subji* fare and he intended to take a train to Lucknow to be with his uncle and enjoy a well earned treat of Lucknow cuisine. We decided to take the Howrah Mail at Allahabad for Santiniketan via Burdwan, and Manik travelled to Lucknow by Mail from Allahabad.

Our Ajanta tour thus ended with a flourish. Our sketchbooks and photographs were admired by Mastermoshai and his colleagues in Kala Bhavan.

After a gap of a year and half, once again Prithwish planned another trip, this time to Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konarak. Prithwish's parents had a holiday resort of their own at Puri, and we braced ourselves again and preferred to skip the usual Kala Bhavan excursion to Bhimbad. We went on the Orissan adventure. Prithwish, as always meticulous in his studies, had drawn a detailed plan for seeing the temples of Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konarak. We had to gang up in four because railway concessions were available only to a minimum of a group of four students. The railway concession was a chief incentive since we had no money to throw about on non-essentials.

At Bhubaneswar and Puri we had an enjoyable time, with the morning sea-bathing, excellent food at the resort and gallivanting all day with sketchbooks and camera.

We had to hire a cart for our journey to Konarak, since there were no buses those days. The cart was more for carrying our beds and material. We preferred to walk the way — full eighteen miles by the sandy road. We regaled ourselves to tea and snacks and raw coconut water, from the wayside shops, and reached Konarak in the evening. The brooding silhouette of the temple was visible on the horizon miles away, and we were excited about the oncoming wonder.

The immense mass of the temple rose to its full stature as we approached. We quickly moved to the lodging available there and decided to relish the awe-inspiring beauty of the temple the next day.

Prithwish made us rise early to see the temple in its morning glory. The vision was incomparable. We sketched and drew and wondered at the vitality of the temple sculptures. When I remarked about the sturdy female dancers on the cornice, ' How magnificent are the limbs, so gracefully shaped!' Manik quipped, 'Ah yes! The sight is fine as far as it goes. If the limbs go further in a kick, you will roll on till you reached the shores of Konarak!'

Prithwish and Muthu had garnered a rich harvest of excellent photographs which even to this day remain as far better reproductions than those of the official Archaeological Survey!

Shortly after this trip, Manik left the Kala Bhavan and joined D.J. Keymer in Calcutta as their artist. We continued to see each other whenever I chanced to go to Calcutta, and the invariable haunt to see him was the Coffee House of the early forties. The smoke of cigarettes, the fragrance of steaming coffee had an heady effect on those who participated in these tête-à-têtes. Here germinated the seeds of *Pather Panchali* that later flowered into an immortal classic.

15 October 1995

The Consummate Designer

PARITOSH SEN

On my return home in the mid-fifties after a fairly long stay abroad, one of my discoveries was the new vibrancy in the field of graphic design in Calcutta. The new publications by the Signet Press headed by Dilip Gupta and designed by Satyajit Ray created quite a sensation and set new trends. Not only the book-covers and dust-jackets wore a new look; the pages inside with new typography and compact setting, generous margins and special attention to legibility — all these became the hallmark of the publications. The illustrations too were imbued with the formal aesthetics of contemporary art. Calligraphy was given its due importance and it played a significant role in the shaping of letters and illustrations. From this point onwards the art of graphic design in Bengal has never looked back. Altogether the scene could be described as that of a mini revolution in printing design — a revolution that was to have far-reaching effect on the future course of graphic art in India as a whole. Since many Bengali books are translated into other Indian languages, the new trends, introduced mainly by Satyajit Ray, influenced book publications in other parts of the country, especially in the Hindi-speaking belt, Gujarat and Kerala.

In 1956 Ray's first film *Pather Panchali* was released. He designed not only the entire publicity material of the film — slides, posters, booklets, hoardings etc. — but the credit titles as well. These opened up new vistas of creativity for Ray. He had earlier, as a visualizer and later as an art-director of the Ad-firm D.J. Keymer, designed newspaper and magazine campaigns for several well-known firms. But with the opening up of opportunities in book-designing and publicity materials for his own films the scope for creativity enlarged itself infinitely. And Ray seized these opportunities with the gusto and excitement of an explorer and created some memorable designs for posters, hoardings, credit titles, book jackets, record covers and of course, the very innovative cover-designs of the well-known little magazine *Ekshan*. Even the man in the street stopped by to admire the very striking posters and hoardings that were displayed all over the city. Needless to say with the making of each of his films Ray became increasingly more inventive in all branches of its publicity material and the credit cards.

During his student days at the Kala Bhavan in Santiniketan, Ray had the unique opportunity to come in close contact with Nandalal Bose, Binodebehari Mukherjee and Ramkinkar Baij. Their works, their ideas about contemporary art, their approach and understanding of both the classical and folk arts of our country helped Ray to look at our artistic heritage with a critical eye and to appreciate the values and principles that made our art so distinctive and so great. It was also in Santiniketan where Ray learnt to love nature in all its myriad manifestations and developed an enquiring mind about the mysteries of creation. The beautiful trees in different seasons, the wide expanses of the Birbhum landscape, the simple living and joy of life of the Santhal people left an indelible impression upon his mind. It is this experience that primarily helped him to shape his sensibilities. The hidden richness of a nascent creative talent was gradually unfolding itself. During his training under the direct supervision of both Nandalal and Binodebehari, the young Satyajit developed an acute sense of pictorial design and the importance of calligraphy both of the pen and the brush variety. His knowledge and understanding of our classical and folk art had a great influence upon his approach to design as were later exemplified in many of his early advertising works. Along with two of his senior colleagues like O.C. Gangoly and Annada Munshi, Ray tried to free advertising art in India from the imitative Western trends and give it a distinctive Indian look.

An aspect of Ray's inventive faculty was his ability to fashion new letters for book and magazine covers and for posters and banners. Here he was at his inventive best. In Bengali the number of printing typefaces can be counted on one's fingers. There is a special dearth of display faces as opposed to a few thousands in Roman letters. This is why most of the time the graphic designer in our country has to write with either a brush or a pen in order to fashion the title of a book or magazine or a caption or slogan for a product campaign, be it of medicine, toilet, garments, engineering or any other product. Ray's graphic genius reached its peak after he gave up his job as a visualizer cum art director at D.J. Keymer and started practising as a free-lance designer. The art of calligraphy that he learnt from Binodebehari Mukherjee was put to excellent use and became a trendsetter. The variety of letters that he introduced both in Bengali and English showed his profound grasp of the art of typography. A type is an image. It can be likened to images we find in the animate and the inanimate world. It is evocative of forms in nature and has its own principles of anatomy. It can have the attributes of both masculinity and femininity. Ray's typographical essays took all this into consideration and resulted in some of the most stunning innovations in this field. No wonder a whole generation of young designers were influenced by these, and these in their turn helped to raise the general level of graphic art, especially in West Bengal and Bangladesh. He was one of those few designers who was familiar with all the revolutionary inventions of modern European art and did not fight shy to attempt at a fusion of the

values that governed our traditional art with those of the west. I need hardly mention here that the principles and the elements of design are the same both for fine and graphic art. And Ray applied them with great imagination and consummate skill. What is to be remembered here is the astounding variety both in his typographical innovations and illustration works. He gave a lot of thought to the subject he was dealing with and came out with a style that was not only expressive of its spirit but became an object of aesthetic contemplation; in short, a product of a highly refined sensibility.

Typographical experiments by Ray for his feature films Devi, Kanchanjangha *and* Aranyer Dinratri.

His design sense was extended to designing costumes and sets for some of his films and was highly appreciated by viewers. But it is for his very innovative designs related to his films, books and magazines that Satyajit Ray will be remembered most. It is hoped that these will soon be displayed permanently as part of the Satyajit Ray archive.

Satyajit Ray and Advertising

SUBRATA BANERJEE

Advertising is a very high-exposure profession. This exposure, however, is limited to those who are directly engaged in the business of buying and selling advertising services — the advertising managers of business organizations and client servicing personnel or account executives of advertising agencies. The men and women who create the advertisements, which not only persuade consumers to buy particular products or services but also change value systems and life-styles, remain hidden behind a veil of anonymity, like editorial writers in newspapers. This is what makes it so difficult to discuss Satyajit Ray's contribution to Indian advertising.

Modern advertising is a very young profession in India. It has really begun to come into its own now but in an environment of globalization, which also means homogenization of advertising design and messages. In such a situation, it is unfortunate that social scientists and even advertising professionals have not felt the need for in-depth research on the development of advertising in India in all its diverse aspects, including an Indian approach as distinct from an imitation of, or a derivation from, the western. It is only when such an attempt is made will it be possible to assess the contribution of Satyajit and his contemporaries, such as Annada Munshi, O. C. Gangoly and others, to Indian advertising. This is also true of those who developed an approach to advertising in the Indian market, in terms of messages and even the use of media, based on a profound understanding, however instinctive, of the psychology of the Indian consumer. What is most remarkable is that this process took place when there were none of the sophisticated tools that are available today.

The generation that had initiated and developed this process is a dying generation. There are still a few individuals alive who can help a serious researcher in identifying the advertisements designed by Satyajit and his associates. It is not difficult to identify the major advertisers for whom Satyajit worked. The painstaking work would be to go through the files of *The Statesman* for about a decade and a little more, from the early forties to the mid-fifties to locate the relevant advertisements. Without such access to the work of Satyajit, one can only indulge in reminiscences of working with him and draw attention to some broad characteristics of his work and contribution to Indian advertising.

It might be worthwhile recalling the environment in which Satyajit and some of us came to work in advertising. With a few exceptions, advertising in India had been totally under the influence of the West, in the early years. This is understandable. The major advertising agencies were branches of foreign agencies. They worked mainly for foreign companies. The market for the products and services was limited. Those who conceived the advertisements and those who translated them into designs were mostly Englishmen. The Indian artists and executives worked in this environment.

Then came the Second World War. The Englishmen had to leave to fight the war. What is more, advertising was compelled to reach out to the entire people of the country to create support for a war, which no Indian could consider his own. Hence the search for a new idiom, a new language. The Government of India had to draw upon the resources available within the advertising agencies and most of such personnel were Indians. The process that began during the war continued and received a greater impetus after independence, when both Indian and foreign business houses were keen to associate themselves with the new India in the making. It became fashionable to identify with Indian symbols, images and even stereotypes. Advertising took on an Indian appearance.

Satyajit joined D.J. Keymer, a British advertising agency, in June 1943. This was after spending a couple of years or so in Santiniketan at the Kala Bhavan, under such masters as Nandalal Bose and Binodebehari Mukherjee and in the company of such artists as Ramkinkar and such art connoisseurs as Prithwish Neogy. He had joined Kala Bhavan because his mother wanted him to. There is no doubt, however, that apart from his deep interest in music and films, he had also been interested in painting, along with photography. I remember approaching him to make a poster with a portrait of Lenin, for an exhibition of posters on the struggle against fascism. This was in early 1940. The poster exhibition had been organized by the Youth Cultural Institute, an organization of Communist and other Left-minded young people. Satyajit had developed an interest in going in for commercial art. It is significant that he felt restless in Santiniketan, with its placid life totally cocooned from the war which had come to the gates of India by 1941 and only marginally affected by the Quit India movement of 1942. His search for a job as a commercial artist landed him in D.J. Keymer, where there was someone who knew his background. This was D.K. Gupta. It is interesting that for the first advertising campaign that he prepared for D.K. as a test, Satyajit also wrote the headline or caption.

His training at Santiniketan stood Satyajit in good stead in his work as a visualizer in an advertising agency. He saw the life of the people at close quarters. Nandalal Bose taught him to observe life and nature from different perspectives. This gave him a new perception of reality. He was able, if one might say so, to internalize the objective reality and give it new shape in the colour of his subjective perception, born of his interaction with life and its rhythm, shape, colour and movement all around him.

He mastered the art of figure drawing. In the library at Santiniketan he studied the works of western painters. His discussions with his friend Prithwish opened up new vistas of understanding of art movements and art forms. His visits on educational tours to various centres of art and sculpture in India brought him close to the Indian tradition. In the neighbouring villages of Bolpur he became familiar with the rich earthy popular folk forms. He thus acquired a versatility born of his deep knowledge of different art traditions. He also developed a liking for calligraphy, using the Japanese calligraphic brush.

It is with this background that he came to commercial art. He was indeed lucky that he could join D.J. Keymer. Given the inherent constraints of advertising as such, here the environment was relatively favourable thanks to D.K. and a succession of rather appreciative and sympathetic British managers. When Satyajit Joined Keymer's, the Art Director was Annada Munshi. He was a great influence. Satyajit progressed rapidly and from a visualizer he became Art Director by 1950. In the same year Keymer's sent him to the UK for further experience and training. He felt he did not have much to learn there. The latter part of his stay in London he worked with Bensons, of which Keymer was an affiliate. The Art Director at Bensons influenced Satyajit to some extent.

In the early fifties, I drifted into advertising. This was possible because of a number of friends in the profession, all of whom were then in D.J. Keymer. Here I had the privilege of working with my old friend Satyajit for a very brief period. It was quite an experience and it helped me to appreciate and understand various aspects of layout and design. This was a great help to me when I had to run an office of Clarion, the agency which took over from Keymer in Calcutta, in Bombay. The visual sense that I had developed through my association with Satyajit helped me to get the kind of designs I wanted from freelance artists and even attempt, not without success, a few typographical designs.

Discipline had always been a part of Satyajit's character. He was hard working and dependable. Above all he had developed an attitude of detachment about the work he did in advertising. All these qualities were essential for a successful career as a creative person in this highly commercial profession. In a sense a visualizer in advertising is not a free agent. He only interprets the copy or the text provided to him. Satyajit very effectively married aesthetics to functional art to make a selling point without sacrificing artistic expression. This was not as easy as it sounds, because the advertiser, for whom the advertisement was created, often had his own ideas, which were not necessarily artistic. As he paid for it he called the tune. In such situations, I remember approaching Satyajit very hesitantly to tell him what the client or the advertiser wanted. He would usually listen without a word, take the artwork from my hand and toss it aside on his table. He would revise the artwork but would never compromise with artistic principles. It was then left to us to convince the client. More often than not Satyajit's name itself worked.

Such was the reputation he had earned among the major clients of D.J. Keymer.

There were occasions when he even changed the headline of the copy I gave him. He usually related it to his visual interpretation of the message I wanted to put across. It was always appropriate and an improvement. He had developed the art of interpreting words and concepts visually. He used the text and type along with pictures as a totally integrated design. The strength of his layout and advertising design lay in its utter simplicity which had a dramatic impact. There was an elegance in his drawings and in the typography. He used a wide variety of styles to suit the needs of the product or service and the concept projected in the copy. He used woodcuts, scraper board, pen and ink sketches of extreme delicacy and sometimes wash drawings. He experimented with rubber solution to create a design. He used space, especially white space, with great effect.

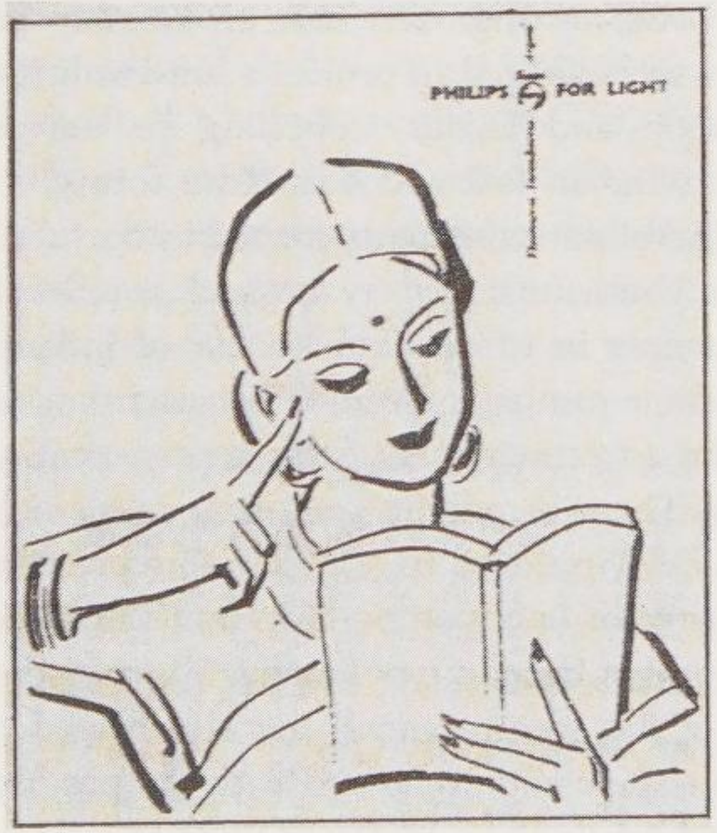
The discipline of working within a limited space found its finest expression in the sketches of the frames for his films later. Similarly his use of space was seen at its dramatic best in the hoardings he designed later for his first film, *Pather Panchali*. The diversity of his communication styles and their dramatic impact were evident year after year in the advertisements he created for his own films. He brought to Indian advertising a sophisticated approach, an originality that broke away from western perceptions and created an Indian environment and yet managed to project a universality which is the essence of successful advertising design, illustration and layout, appealing to universal human motivations. This Indianness brought to advertising Indian folk and decorative forms.

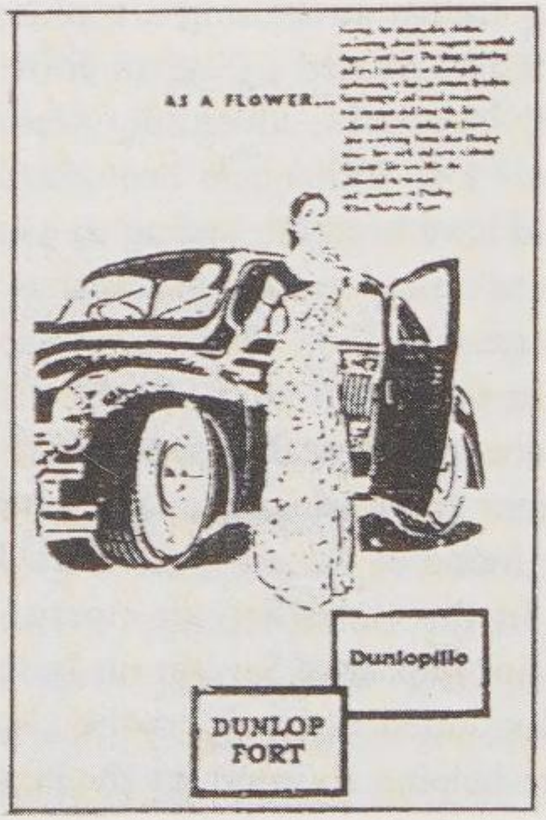
It would have been interesting to analyse a number of advertisements created by Satyajit as examples of his infinite variety and use of Indian design motifs. Unfortunately, very few such samples are available. The advertisement for C.K. Sen is typical of the manner in which he made use of Indian motifs and folk art. On the other hand, if you study the Paludrine campaign you see his attention to detail and ability to create a typical environment. None of the advertisements of this series is static. They deal with different types of families and even situations. There is mobility and even an element of drama within the frame of the advertisement. It could be easily reduced to a miniature representing a frame of a film. In this series Satyajit emerges as the master of line, composition and the use of space.

The major impact of Satyajit on Indian advertising has been in typography. His choice of types and their display added not only to the visual impact of the advertisement, but also helped to create an atmosphere helping to interpret the copy and the message and integrated with the product or service being advertised. A very sensitive typographer, he had developed a profound understanding of the form and structure and colour of different typefaces. Faced with a shortage of a variety of typefaces in Bengali, Satyajit began experimenting with his mastery over calligraphy to meet the demands of advertising design. A typical example is his advertisements for Signet Bookshop. These were purely typographical

advertisements and exquisite expressions of integrated design with a powerful visual and even dramatic impact. Here was Bengali calligraphy at its finest, a modern development of an old tradition. It is indeed a pity that Satyajit did not create a few Bengali typefaces. There is no doubt that he revolutionized Bengali typography. He has left behind innumerable specimens in his cover designs of magazines, books and advertisements and the credit titles of his own films.

The mid-forties to the mid-fifties had been the most creative years of D.J. Keymer in Calcutta. The high standard had been set by men like Annada Munshi, Satyajit Ray, Makhan Datta Gupta and O.C. Gangoly and a group of account executives led by D. K. Gupta. Satyajit was associated with the advertising of all the important clients of D.J. Keymer — Atlantis East, Philips, Liptons, Dunlop, Shalimar Paints, C.K. Sen, East India Pharmaceuticals, Tea Board, Burmah Shell, ICI, ITC, DVC, the Martin Burn Group, Bata and others. After nearly 15 years he left advertising in 1956, when he started work on *Aparajito*. During the shooting of *Pather Panchali* he had been on leave off and on.





Early advertisement layouts by Ray for Philips *and* Dunlop.

Many incidents come to mind of my association with Satyajit at D.J Keymer. One I remember very vividly. He was then busy shooting *Pather Panchali*. He used to drop in at the office occasionally. I was working on a campaign for India Foils. He walked into the room, just to say 'Hello !' I asked him to design a symbol for India Foils. He picked up the copy I had written. He sat down in the chair in front of me and started scribbling on a piece of paper. What ultimately emerged in a few minutes was a manikin made of aluminium foil. Thus was born Al-foil.

Shortly after Satyajit left advertising, the Calcutta office of D.J. Keymer closed down. Four of us, Subrata Sen Gupta, Subhas Sen, S.N. Banerjee and myself, conceived the idea of taking over the business by forming a co-operative of the employees. Thus was born Clarion Advertising Services Private Limited, not as a co-operative but as a company, every one of whose employees was a shareholder. Satyajit readily agreed to be our Vice-Chairman.

It was not a token association. In 1956, when he was shooting *Aparajito* at Banaras, I visited him with the copy for a campaign on steel, intended for Hindusthan Steel. I spent a couple of days with him and in between shooting he worked out the visuals for me. This campaign was later used by Indian Iron and Steel Co. That was probably the last advertising campaign that Satyajit did, apart from the advertisements for his own films.

As I look back, I often wonder, how he could put so much of his talent into advertising, which he left not only because he had chosen film direction as his work, but also because he resented the interference of clients, many of whom were philistines. There was the satisfaction, however, of working for a few advertising managers, who were capable of appreciating good work, such as R.K. Sirkar of Dunlop, Vishwanathan of Liptons, Prabhu Guha Thakurta of DVC and a few others. It was the tradition set by Satyajit that continued to pervade the studio of Clarion for quite a few years, in the hands of younger members such as Shyam Guha and Samir Sarkar and of course Kanu Basu, who succeeded as Art Director. Understandably Clarion managed to retain most of the major clients of D.J. Keymer in Calcutta. Satyajit too maintained his association with the organization for quite some time.

What were his views on advertising ? I had never had occasion to discuss this with him. One might, however, mention the cameo of the antics of an advertising practitioner and a prospective client in *Nayak*. It was a highly amusing though not very flattering comment on the profession.

Manik and His Music

ADI GAZDAR

I first met Manik at a Calcutta Gramophone Society Concert around 1946. We were both founder members and used to go regularly to hear concerts of recorded classical Western music, which used to take place every Thursday around 6 p.m. The concerts were first held in Waterloo Street in the HMV office at that time if I remember correctly. Then the venue was shifted to the YMCA (S.N. Banerjee Road) and later to YMCA, Middleton Row.

The programmes were planned very well so that in the year, one heard major works by Bach and Handel, most of the Beethoven Symphonies and Concertos; and also the important symphonies and concertos of Haydn and Mozart, and works by Brahms, Liszt, Schumann, Chopin, Debussy, Ravel and Wagner. In other words most of the standard concert repertoire was covered within the year.

Manik and I knew each other then as acquaintances, and were usually the only two persons there who used to follow the music with miniature scores. We often discussed the works heard during the interval. I remember regularly attending these recorded concerts of the Gramophone Society till I left for England in 1955. Till that time Manik and I were just acquaintances. When I was in England, I saw both *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito* — because mutual friends had written to me and told me not to miss them when they were shown in London. I remember seeing *Pather Panchali* on the first Wednesday after it opened and was thrilled with it. It was truly a poem, and one really did not have to read any subtitles to follow it. On the Saturday that followed I took all my friends of the medical and nursing staff of the hospital where I was attached and we were all excited having seen such an excellent film. We all came back to our staff room and chatted all night about the beauty, simplicity and poignancy of this very human and realistically filmed story about our country people and rural Bengal life. We talked into the early morning hours, and then the Sunday papers arrived with their rapturous reviews, especially those by Dilys Powell and C.A. Lejeune (film critics of *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*) who were bowled over by this first film by an unknown Indian film director.

I discovered that Manik liked music from the Gregorian Chants down to the era of the three Bs — Bach, Beethoven and Brahms — but he did not much care for the other Romantics. He liked some

composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — Brahms, Debussy, Ravel and Bartok — but not the avant garde of the Stockhausen, Aaron Schönberg and Alban Berg variety. He was passionately fond of Mozart, particularly his operas *Marriage of Figaro, Cosi fan tutte, Don Giovanni* and the *Magic Flute* — I used to hear him occasionally whistle arias from them. Although Manik had no formal training, he was a genius with perfect pitch, and had picked it up himself, and from 1961 on, from *Teen Kanya* onwards, he composed the music for all his films.

He considered *Charulata* his best film, and he gave me a very musical explanation for it, and that too in terms of Chamber music. He considered this his Magnum Opus, as a String Quintet — the first violin being Charu, the second violin being Amal, the cello being Bhupati — as the three central characters — the two violas being Umapada and Mandakini, in other words not as important as this trio but still essential to the story line. Having seen this film several times, I think it also describes these five characters and their relationship with each other very well.

When I returned from England in 1959, I met Satyajit, this time socially, at a friend's place and thereafter remained a close friend of his and the family till he passed away. I have been on most of the sets from *Mahanagar* and *Charulata* onwards, whenever I could get away for even an hour or two from my medical commitments. I was also his guest on many of his location shootings for a day or two in places like Betla, Ketchki and Chipador (near Ranchi) and, also Digha, Santiniketan, Lucknow and other places where the outdoor scenes were shot.

Between set-changing both in the studios and during outdoor shooting Manik would often discuss some of the new recordings and cassettes he had heard or read about, and I used to do the same of course, confining myself mainly to the Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms periods.

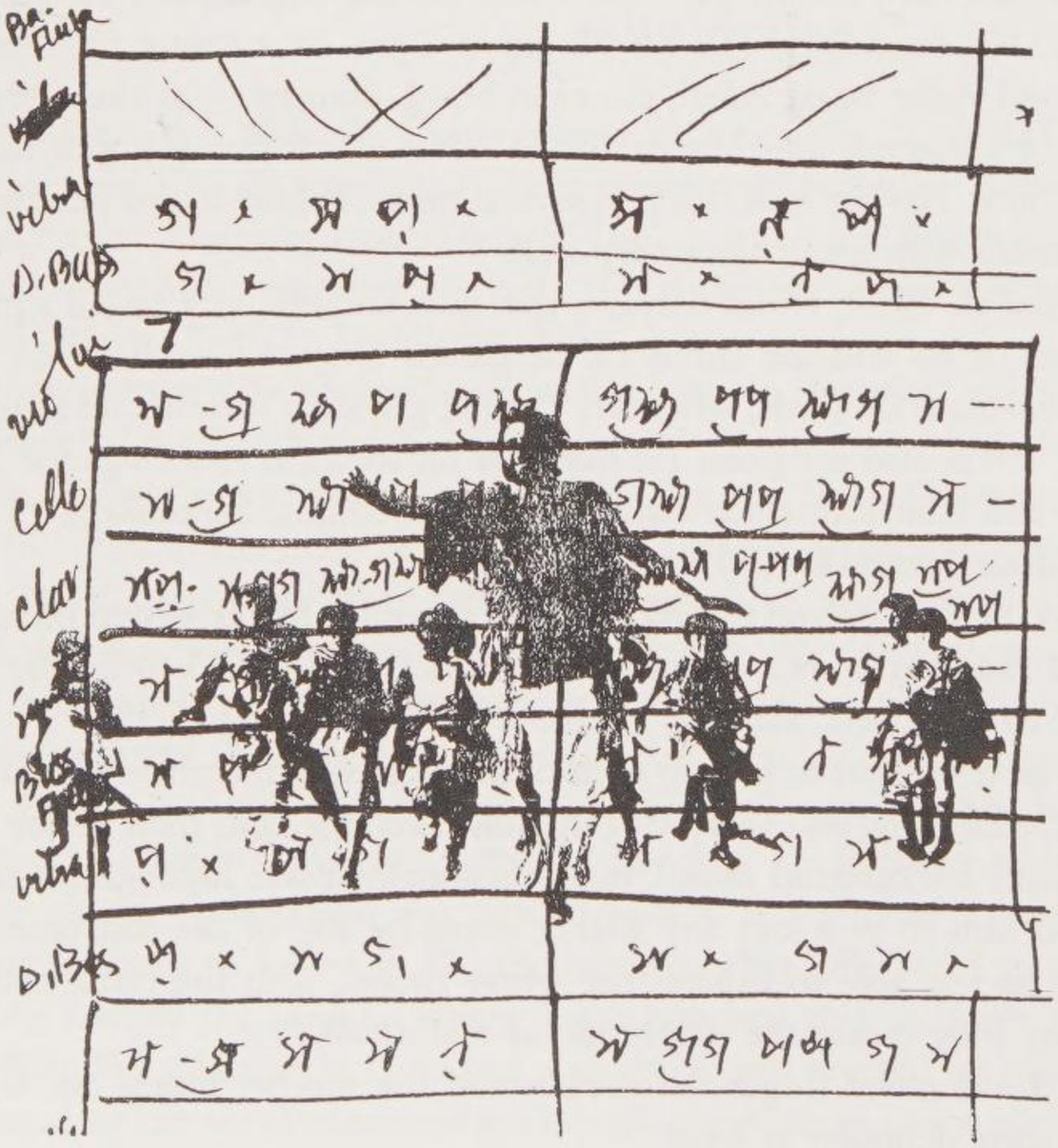
He had devised a notation, which he used to give to each of his orchestral members whom he used to first rehearse individually and sectionally, and then with the full ensemble, and then go for a 'take'. The music he composed was mainly background music, but occasionally it was highlighted at various points. His perfect pitch enabled him to pick out any wrong notes by any of the instrumentalists.

Because of his perfect pitch, he was able to express the whole mood, with the right instruments and the right sound, and thereby fully create the whole mood realistically.

When Harihar comes home, I will never forget the dilruba and the mother biting her sari which immediately let you know that their daughter is dead.

In *Jalsaghar,* the whole atmosphere of that ethos was created in perfect detail. In *Charulata,* in the Music Room Scene where one of Bhupati's friends sings 'Maney karo shesher se-din bhayankar', we got the feeling of being there at that time in history. In *Goopy Gyne,* the scene of the *naach* of the *bhoots* was unforgettable. What is more, the children were not frightened; in fact, after the first

viewing, I told Manik that all the children around were excitedly talking about the ghosts and were not scared of them. Then in addition, Goopy and Bagha became their friends whom they wanted to see over and over again. In fact, I know three families where the children persuaded their parents to take them to see *Goopy and Bagha* three or more times. This film had one of the longest Calcutta runs in Bengali films, probably because of this fact.



Ray's notation for a song in Hirak Rajar Deshey.

The Oxford Mission Orchestra founded by Father Theodore Mathieson gave its first public concert at the Hindi High School in 1967, and Anup Biswas was discovered playing in the cellos at the age of nine, and I remember mentioning to Manik that Anup was then about as tall as his cello when fully

extended on its peg ! I told him that even in his short solo of sixteen bars he made a solid impression on me as having great potential, an impression confirmed by his later development mainly through his studies in London and later in Geneva with Pierre Fournier which he was able to do because of the tremendous support of Theodore Mathieson and the family. Manik was also impressed when he first heard him and became a patron of the Oxford Mission Orchestra.

Manik's film music enhanced his film sequences and never intruded on them, a characteristic one can notice already in one of his earliest compositions for the Ivory-Merchant *Shakespearewallah,* after which he always confidently handled all background music scores. His knowledge of Indian classical music and the songs of Tagore made his a unique and highly individual style. The music was usually recorded after the visuals had been taken, and thereafter began the editing and mixing of the two.

Whenever there were some good time concerts in Calcutta I used to tell him about these and arrange for his tickets. Two personal events I shall particularly treasure. On one occasion Rosalyn Turnech, and on another Rostropovitch, with his wife Galina, and Pianist Fali Pavri, Manik and Monku-di were our dinner guests, and I remember these occasions as major events in my life for we had very interesting musical discussions on those occasions — as also the narration of each others' musical experiences and anecdotes by all present.

In his Radio talk in 1970 on 'What Beethoven means to me', he made a very profound comparison between Western Classical music and filmmaking, and I quote these lines verbatim :

> I have always believed that a filmmaker is greatly helped by a knowledge of Western Classical Music. I say Western and I say classical, because I am thinking here of music that is not improvised but exists for all time in the shape in which it has been conceived. This happens in the case of Western Classical Music, and, in a very similar way this happens in cinema too. Both exist in time,both have their rhythms, both their variations of moods and pace and accent.
>
> I knew music before I knew the cinema and the first piece of Western Classical I got to know and love was Beethoven's. I can therefore say with complete honesty that I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to Beethoven.
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> It was Beethoven again, who drove me to the study of miniature scores, which opened for me the complex and wonderful world of orchestration. This was the basis for my eventual work as composer of functional music for my films.

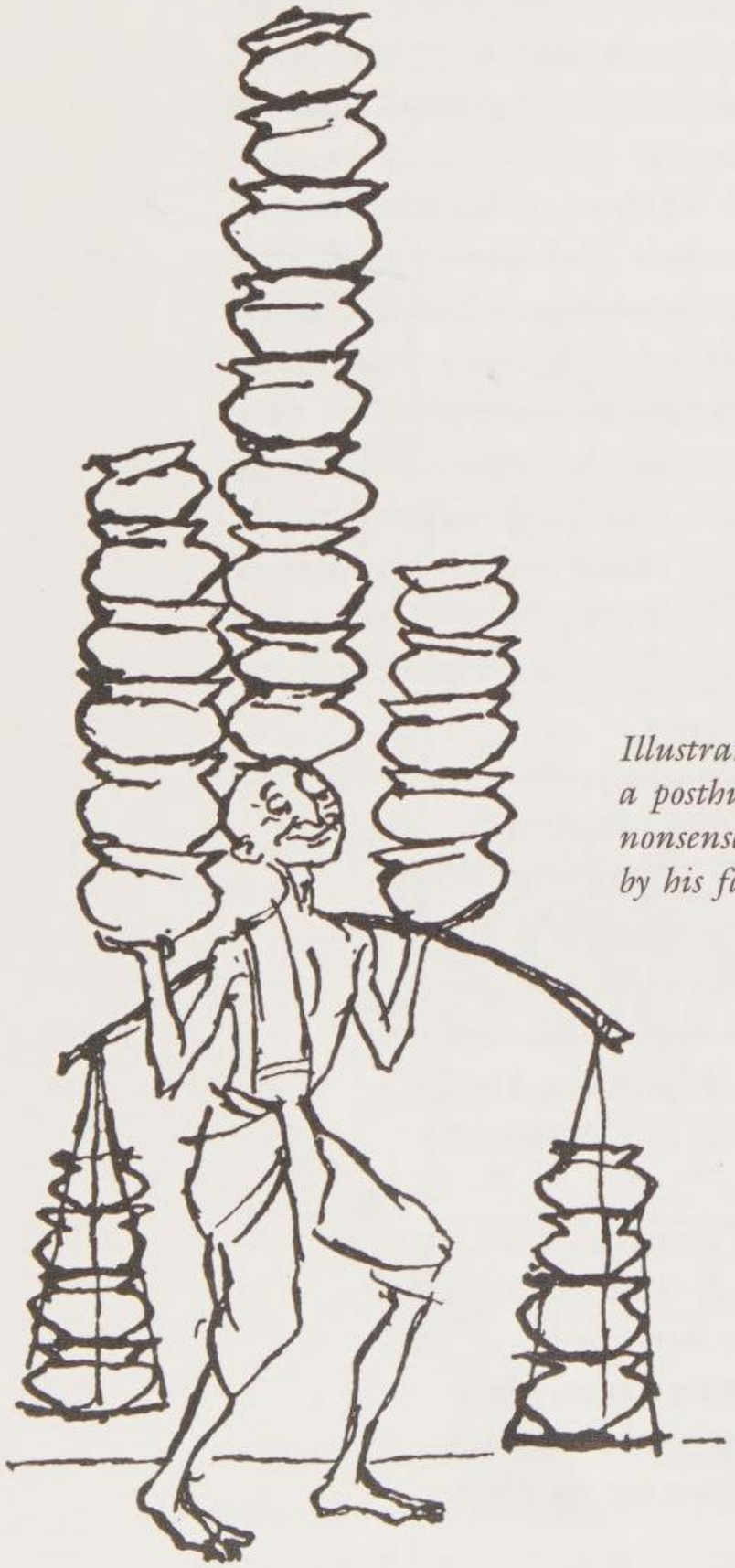


Illustration from Khai Khai — *a posthumous collection of nonsense verse written by his father, Sukumar Ray*

Illustrations for an advertisement

SATYAJIT RAY
the first time

STORIES, ARTICLES, TRANSLATIONS, POEMS, COMIC STRIPS

His first story in English
'Abstraction'. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18 May 1941.

His first article on film
'What is wrong with Indian films'. *The Statesman*, 1948.

His first translation of a poem
'Pāpāngul', from Edward Lear. *Sandesh*, Baishakh 1368 [Bengali calendar], May 1961.

His first story
'Bankubābur Bandhu'. *Sandesh*, Magh 1368 [Bengali calendar], February 1961.

His first Shonku story
'Byomjātrir Diary'. *Sandesh*, Ashwin–Agrahayan 1368 [Bengali calendar], September–November 1961 (three consecutive issues).

His first limerick
'Limerick', translated from Edward Lear.
Sandesh, Jaishthya 1368 [Bengali calendar], June 1961.

His first article on cinema for children
'Cinemār Kathā'. *Sandesh*, serialized at irregular intervals, in Bhadra-Ashwin 1374 [Bengali calendar], October 1967; Magh 1374 [Bengali calendar], January 1967; Baishakh 1375 [Bengali calendar], May 1968; Bhadra-Ashwin 1375 [Bengali calendar], October 1968; Bhadra-Ashwin 1376 [Bengali calendar], October 1969; left incomplete.

His first fairy tale
'Kanāi-er Kathā'. *Sandesh*, Phalgun Chaitra 1392 [Bengali calendar], February-March 1985.

His first original poem
'Bhiḍ'. *Sandesh*, Jaishthya 1369 [Bengali calendar], June 1962.

His first Felu-dā story
'Felu-dār Goendāgiri'. *Sandesh*, Agrahayan-Magh 1372 [Bengali calendar], December 1965–February 1966.

His first comic strip
In *Sandesh*, Ashadh-Shravan 1377 [Bengali calendar], August 1970.

His first translation of a story
'Blue–John gahvarer bibheeshikā', from Arthur Conan Doyle.
Sandesh, Baishakh-Jaishthya 1374 [Bengali calendar], May 1984.

His first article on animals
'Chimpanzee-r Bandhu.' *Sandesh*, Baishakh 1391 [Bengali calendar], May 1984.

His first account of film shooting for children
'Oot banām train'. *Sandesh*, Baishakh 1382 [Bengali calendar], May 1975.

Abstraction

He was twenty-four, tall and lean. He had lean limbs, a lean face and a leaner purse. He was an artist.

The story starts at a moment when a casual observer could see him sitting on a three-legged chair in an attitude of utmost inertia. A half-consumed cigarette hung precariously from his lips, and his hands held a book which seemed to absorb all his attention.

The same observer would see nothing unusual in the scene. But a closer inspection by one not so casual would reveal the one inexplicable touch in the picture. The book in his hand was held upside down.

This startlingly unusual way of perusing a novel is explained by the fact that he was not reading at all. He was not even looking at the book. He was merely gazing at what is called the 'middle distance'. His eyes had that particular, wide-open stare which reveals that a person is preoccupied. He was, in fact, thinking of the Exhibition.

It was an insertion in the morning papers which told him about it. The Fine Arts Exhibition, 'on a scale infinitely bigger than has hitherto been possible,' was to open its doors to the public on the fifteenth of January. A wide range of subjects and an unlimited choice of medium were two conspicuous features of the Exhibition. This gave the artists considerable scope for displaying their talents.

It was this announcement about the Exhibition which occupied his mind now. So cold and matter-of-fact in print, it had proved to be an unusually exciting bit of news for him. He had waited long and patiently for an opportunity like this. It was the one and only chance of his gaining a certain amount of public recognition as a fairly adept wielder of the brush. Not that he had any illusions about his talents. Far from it. He knew that he could barely hope for an official commendation of his work, far less for one of the substantial cash prizes which were being offered. But he must see his picture hung all the same, and let the public see it.

And, of course, there is always the possibility that the critics would just happen to mention your name in the review columns. You never can tell! 'Of no little interest,' they might perhaps write, 'is Mr. –'s canvas entitled "A Family Group". An attractive composition, executed with a judicious choice of colours', and so on.

In that attitude of languid relaxation, with the inverted book in his hand, he gave himself up to meditation. He had to think out a subject for his painting.

* * *

If he had any leaning in his personal views on Art, it was towards Realism. Like a strip of adhesive tape, he stuck to it faithfully and tenaciously. Those horrible distortions of Nature which seemed to be the essence of Modern Art enraged his aesthetic sense.

He dreaded that thing called Surrealism. And 'Abstractions', a term used for those fantastic combinations of lines and forms drawn with a lunatic incoherence, left him utterly cold and unmoved. Among his friends who dabbled in Art either in the capacity of amateur critics or as painters, those who were modern in their viewpoints reproached him for his narrow outlook. 'It's ridiculous, old man!' they would say, 'you can't carry on with those out-moded notions of yours! You must study and appreciate the moderns, you have to. How can you ignore geniuses like'—and here an avalanche of metallic sounding names would descend upon him, which left his ears ringing but his opinion unchanged.

More than once in the past, he had made attempts to read books on Modern Art, but each time he found the pictures in them so ridiculous that it speedily rendered such attempts null and void. He remembered once having seen such an illustration. It seemed to him a rather amateurish attempt at drawing a Neanderthal woman with elephantiasis and a giraffe's neck. The title put the finishing touch to it : 'Le Beau Ideal', it was called. He considered it the funniest joke he had ever come across.

* * *

The following day he set to work on his picture. It would be a water colour, that particular medium being his forte. He had decided about the subject during the previous evening's meditation. It was to be a pictorial representation of one of his favourite scenes from Shakespeare. He would draw Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, and call it 'The Somnambulist'.

Never before had he felt so much enthusiasm in commencing work on a picture as he felt now. He whistled softly as he tried various colour combinations on a sheet of paper. After he had hit upon a satisfactory scheme, the actual work on the contemplated masterpiece began.

* * *

For the ten days that his picture took, he was rarely seen outside the gloomy, depressing little room which served as his studio. For the first time he was putting all his heart and soul into a picture. The patience and energy which he put into his work now was most unusual in a man so sluggish and slovenly in his ways.

The last touches were put on the fifth of January. It was approaching darkness when he finally put down his brushes and stretched his arms to relieve the tension of his muscles.

Then he went a few steps backwards and gazed at the easel from a distance, appraising the finished work.

He kept looking at it for full five minutes—his eyes half closed and his head hanging sideways. The longer he looked, the more it grew in his estimation. The colour, the expression, the composition,—they all seemed to bear testimony to his inspiration.

With a sudden thrill he realized that he had excelled himself. It was a far finer thing that met his eye now than he had ever imagined himself to be capable of. It gave him a keen sense of satisfaction to know that ten days of concentrated labour had not been in vain.

But he could not afford to waste time in idle appreciation of his work. It was the last day for sending the entries, and he must post the thing that very night. After all, it was more important that the critics should see all that he saw.

Going over to the easel, he unmounted the picture and went in search of a piece of string and brown paper.

When he came out of the Post Office, his eyes were aching and his temples throbbing. It was a natural reaction.

With slow, heavy steps he proceeded towards the more secluded part of the city. He needed fresh air very badly.

The cool evening breeze did him good, and he returned home, after an hour, feeling considerably refreshed.

* * *

The following morning found him minus the last traces of fatigue. He felt a thoroughly invigorated man. While breakfasting he had a casual glance at the newspaper. There was a small announcement by the Society of Fine Arts to the effect that they were gratified to see the unusually large number of entries they received. The Exhibition, they assured, was going to prove an unqualified success.

He had half a mind to go up and arrange his studio a bit. He knew it was in a hopeless mess, but at the same time he felt too lazy to do it. After a bit of mental argument he decided in favour of relaxation, feeling that the arrangement might come later.

It was late in the evening when he went up to his studio. Groping in the darkness for a moment, he switched on the light. The room presented a sad spectacle, with tubes thrown here and there, brushes flung far and wide in moments of haste, and little bits of rag and paper strewn all over the place.

He was surveying this chaotic confusion of objects when a sheet of paper caught his eye. It was lying on the ground just below the easel. Somehow it seemed alarmingly familiar. Stooping down, he picked it up.

For a moment the world seemed to grow dark around him, and he clutched at the easel to support himself. For his hand held his beloved masterpiece—'The Somnambulist'; it was Lady Macbeth—his very own creation—who was staring at him now with those glassy, unseeing eyes which he had himself given her!

When the first numbing shock of surprise passed away, a mist of black, brooding despair enveloped him. It did not take him long to realize what had happened. Once more he was a victim of absent-mindedness. It was not a new thing with him. He had been guilty of it more than once in the past. But those occasional fits of preoccupation, and the consequences thereof, had always had a touch of the ludicrous in them. They never brought any serious consequences in their wake.

No, this time it was different. It was tragic and mercilessly so.

He felt sick and feverish. How the Committee must have laughed when they received a parcel which contained a stiff cardboard, and a small piece of paper with his name and the title of a picture—without the picture itself!

The cruel humour of it made him grind his teeth, and he solemnly cursed himself and his fate.

The picture he tore to pieces and threw the bits into the wastepaper basket . . .

* * *

During the week that followed he made every effort to forget about the 'disaster'. To this end he resorted to all sorts of diversions which he had never tried his hand at before. He had all but succeeded when, on the morning of the fifteenth of January, the

opening day of the Exhibition, he received a letter. He was breakfasting when a blue oblong envelope was handed to him. The neat crest on it revealed its source. It was a communication from the Society of Fine Arts.

He speculated momentarily on its contents before tearing open the envelope. It was most likely, he felt, that the Society was making an enquiry about the 'mysterious' parcel. It was perhaps a mere routine with them.

Very carefully, with fingers as steady as he could manage to make them, he took the note out.

'Dear Sir,' he read, 'We feel pleasure in congratulating you . . .' It was incredible! He could hardly believe his own eyes. Briefly, in a semi-formal manner, the Society informed him that his production, 'The Somnambulist', was the proud winner of a first prize. The note concluded with an invitation to the opening ceremony of the Exhibition.

His brain was in a whirl now. He felt more perplexed than pleased. The first ecstatic thrill passed away, giving way to a realization of the utter improbability of the whole thing.

* * *

He reached the Tower Hall half an hour later, breathless and gasping with a suppressed excitement.

The imposing gates were now open to the public, and people had started coming in. He jostled past two substantial Art connoisseurs who seemed to be unnecessarily blocking the traffic.

The Exhibition was on the first floor. He raced up the magnificent carpeted staircase, taking three steps at a time.

The hall presented a truly 'colourful' spectacle. All the four walls of it were teeming with pictures — pictures of varying sizes, from the smallest miniatures to the most colossal canvases.

With a heart beating wildly with excitement he started scanning the pictures. Each of the prize-winning works had a neat label attached to its bottom, announcing the name of the artist and the title of the picture. He decided to concentrate on those little bits of paper.

After an hour's scrutiny he had exhausted the North, the East and South walls. Landscapes, Figures, Still Life studies, Sketches in various media—nothing had escaped him. The thing was proving an ordeal for his eyes, which were now red and aching. Only his determination to solve the mystery helped him to carry on.

But it was with an ebbing enthusiasm that he faced the West wall. His heart sank lower still when he saw what confronted him. They were those dreadful, nightmarish paintings—those Abstractions!

Reluctantly—somewhat mechanically—he glanced at the label below the first picture, which was the first prize winner.

The name seemed familiar—why, it was his own name! And the title?—'The Somnambulist.'

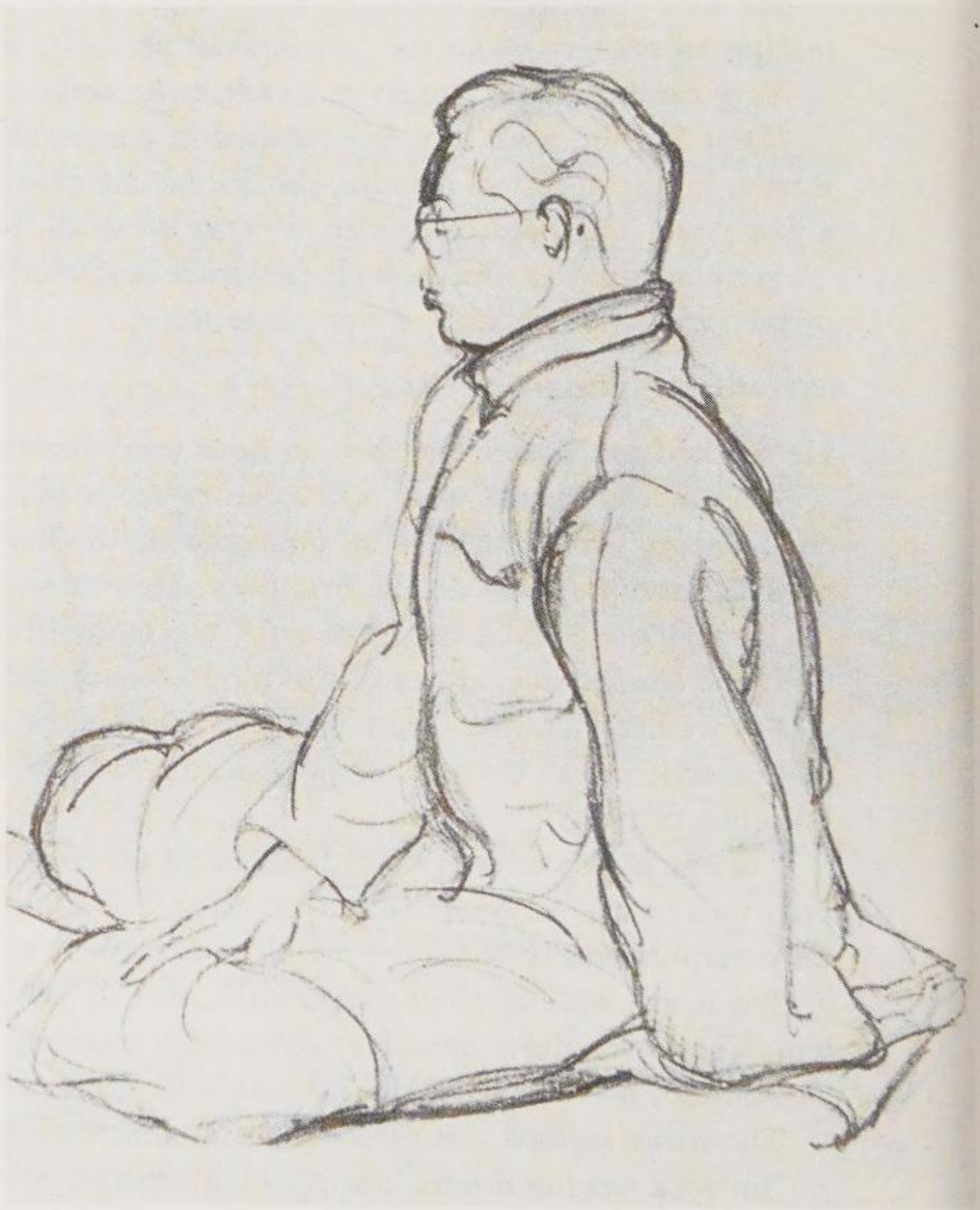
But what was this bizarre looking thing—this weird conglomeration of multi-coloured brush stokes? Surely, he had never drawn anything—but a sudden flash of recognition told him.

It was the paper he had tried his colour scheme on.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 18 May 1941.

Virbhadra Hanji

Dinkar Kowshik

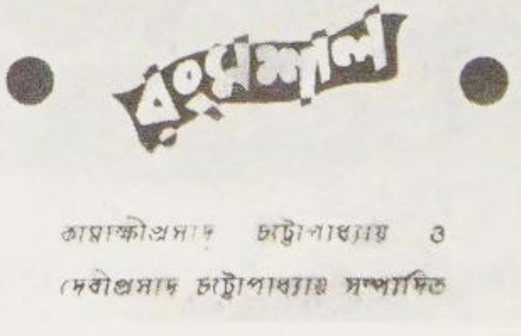


Prithwish Neogy

Sketches of Kalabhavan Classmates, 1941

Two faces of *Pāglā Dāshu* – Sukumar Ray's collection of stories about a madcap schoolboy – cover designs for the 1940 (left) and the 1946 editions (right).

Cover design for *Chhātubābur Chhātā*, a story by Kamakshiprasad Chattopadhyay, 1943.



Cover designs for *Rangmāshal*, children's periodical, edited by Kamakshiprasad Chattopadhyay and Debiprasad Chattopadhyay — a Sukumar Ray special issue in 1944 (left) and Independence Day issue, 1947 (right).

His first illustration for a journal, 1943 — *Mouchāk*

His first opening illustration for a book, 1943 —*Chhātubābur Chhātā*

His first decorative headings for a variety of pieces —
stories, travelogues, features etc. — *Rangmashāl,* a children's monthly, 1944-47

Early Sketches from Konarak (1943) — and from life: Bijaya Ray, sleeping (1949).

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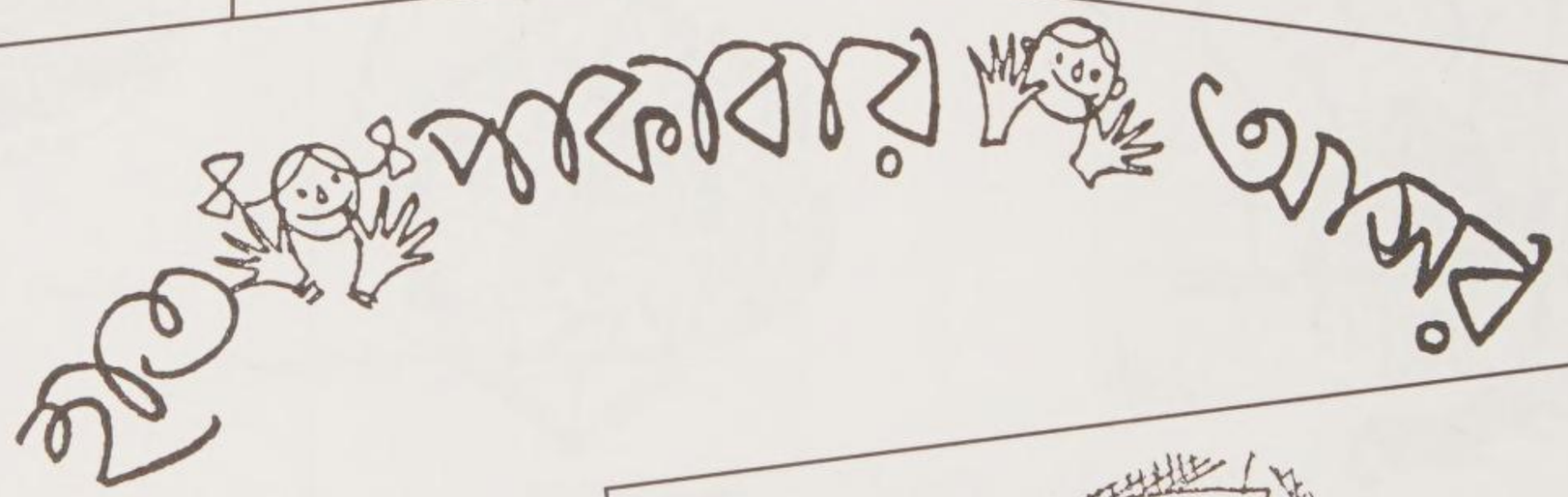

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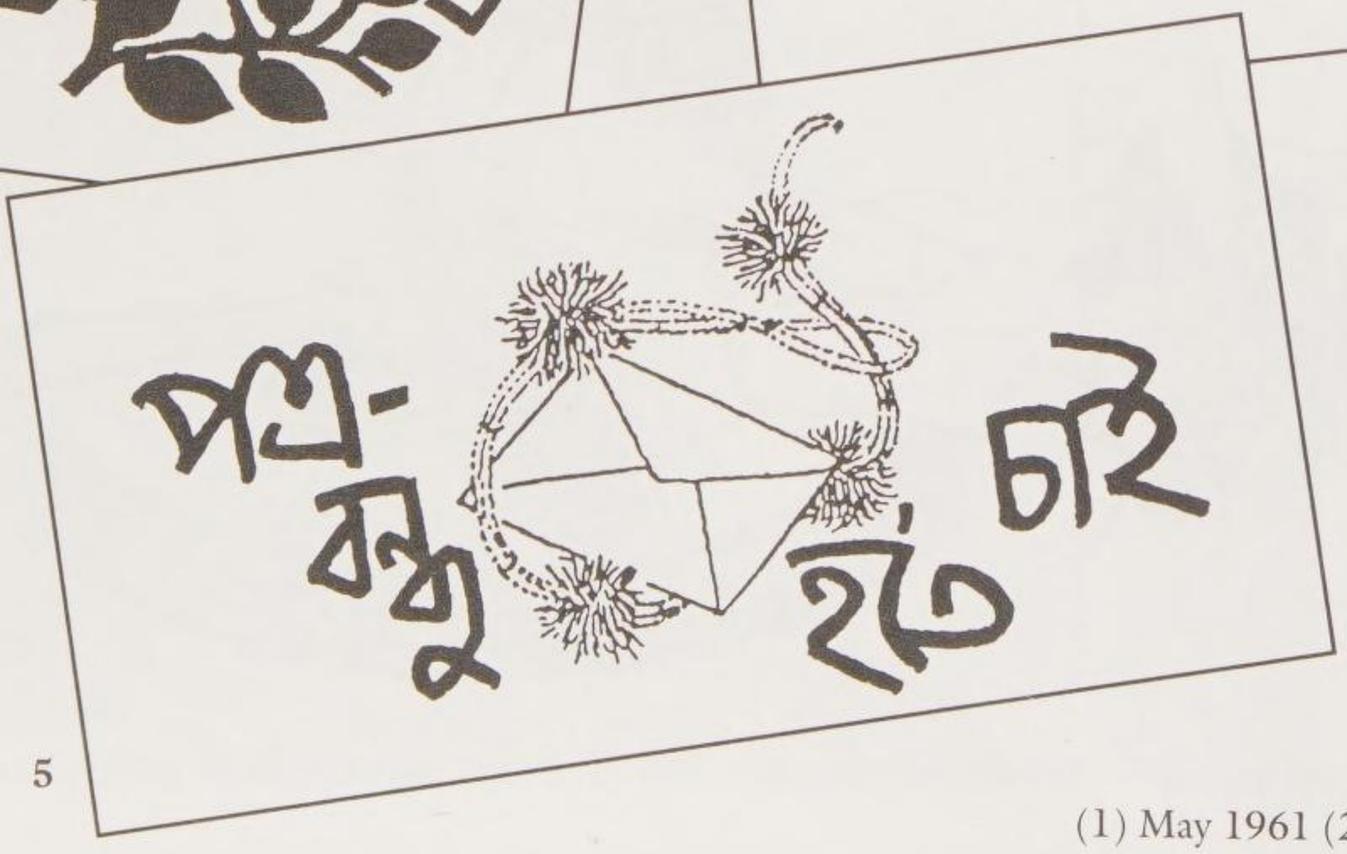

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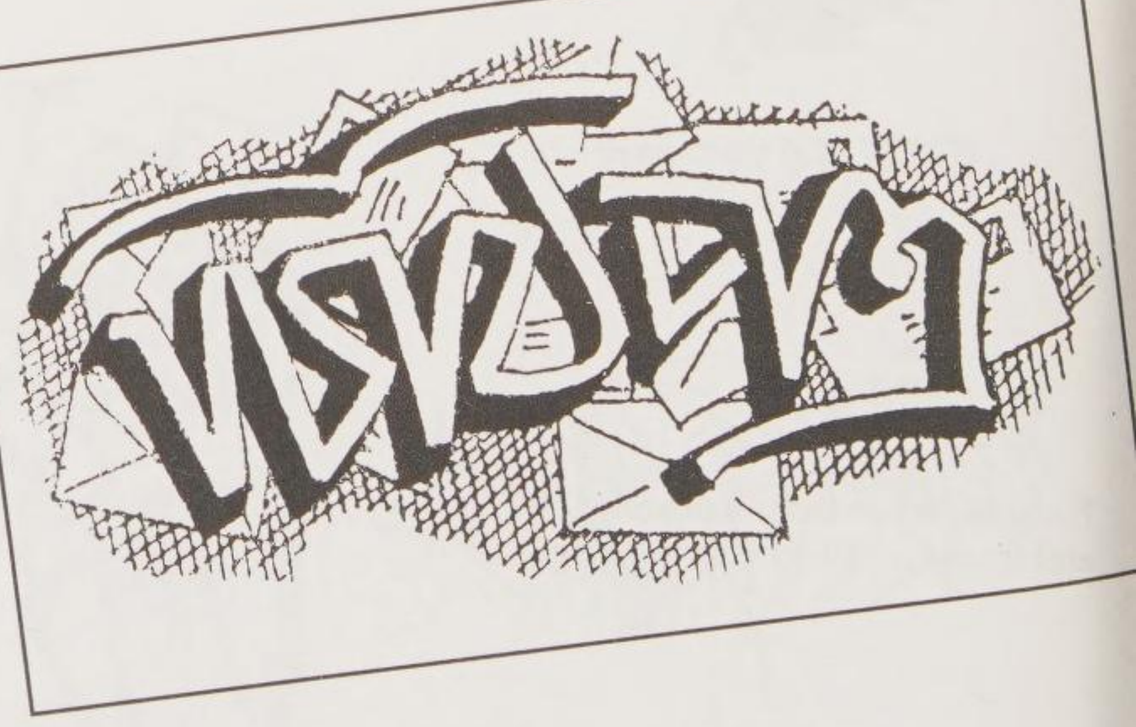


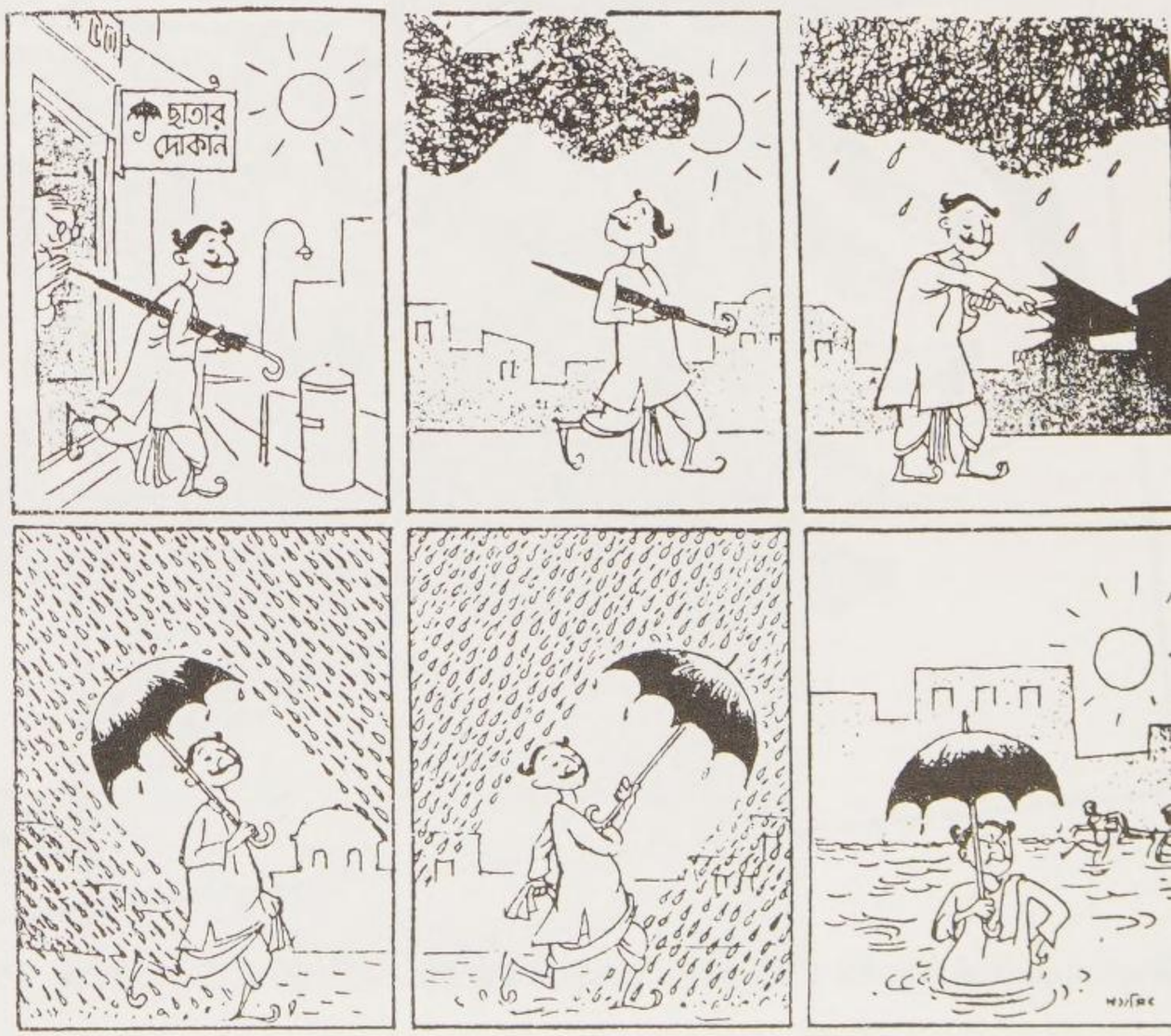
Decorative headings for sections in *Sandesh* —
nature study, sports, penpals, correspondence etc.

(1) May 1961 (2) April 1973 (3) April 1967 (4) May 1961 (5) July 1963 (6) April 1967

Ray's 'first works' in *Sandesh*, on its revival in 1961

A puzzle to be solved (September 1961)

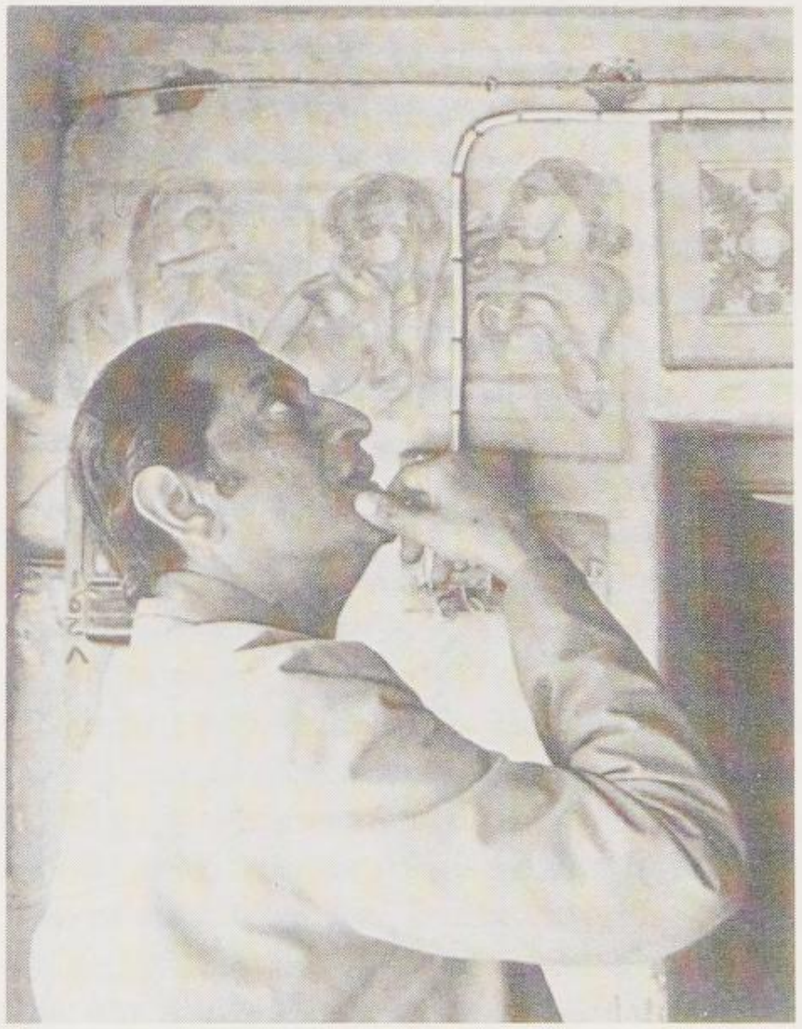
A comic strip (July 1970)



Illustrated heading for the first Feluda Story —
Sandesh, November 1965

Illustrated heading for the first Professor Shanku — *Sandesh*, Sept.-Nov. 1961

SATYAJIT RAY
designer and illustrator



The Graphic Talent of Satyajit Ray

K.G. SUBRAMANYAN

Satyajit Ray's first ambition was, doubtless, to be a graphic designer. His grandfather, Upendrakishore Raychaudhuri had a press and process studio, and was deeply interested in good printing, illustration and reproduction. He also wrote stories for children based on folk tales and myths and illustrated them; and published a very popular children's magazine, *Sandesh*. According to Satyajit he was a very versatile person, a writer, painter, musician, photographer and blockmaker, with serious interests in science and astronomy. Satyajit's father, Sukumar Ray, was also a man of many talents. He wrote well and his humorous skits and nonsense verse, highly imaginative and original, are among the landmarks of modern Bengali literature. He also went to England to study printing technology, particularly advanced techniques in half-tone reproduction. He too was a caricaturist and illustrator who enriched his published texts with zany ink drawings. So the interest ran in the family.

Like his grandfather (who died about six years before he was born) and his father (who died when he was barely two years and a half) Satyajit had a natural talent for drawing. Having spent his early childhood in the same building as housed his grandfather's press he grew up amidst the hardware of the print shop. But the press closed down. And not long after his father's death his mother moved with him to another locality in town. Satyajit went through school and college like most middle class young men. Although well thought of by teachers for his general intelligence and proficiency in the English language his mind was not in such studies. So when he finished these and took his degree (in Economics) his foremost desire was to hone his graphic skills and prepare for a career in graphic design (then called, perhaps appropriately, commercial or advertising art).

His mother encouraged him to go to Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. For her this was a natural choice. They were friends of the Tagores and admirers of Rabindranath's many-sided genius. Also, by that time, Visva-Bharati, Rabindranath's dream-child of an institution, had gained a distinct visibility in spite of the scepticism, even derision, with which it was eyed in the academic circles of Calcutta; particularly Kala Bhavan, under the stewardship of Nandalal Bose. By the end of the thirties Nandalal had come to be known as an artist and teacher of great distinction. And his students adored him. His remarkable work at the three Congress sessions at Lucknow (1936), Faizpur (1936) and Haripura (1938), on the invitation of Mahatma Gandhi, had also shot him into national fame, making him as it were the artist laureate of nationalist India.

Satyajit welcomed the change though he was not initially sure of what to expect. In the circles he moved in in Calcutta, especially among the youth, Santiniketan was not highly thought of; it was considered a camp site for long-haired moon-gazers. Apart from this, Kala Bhavan was not like other professional schools. It

offered no structured technical courses leading to a career. Besides, the picture he so far had of the modern Indian art scene through the reproductions in Ramananda Chatterjee's journals was not highly appetizing either. All the same he honoured his mother's wish and went to Santiniketan.

And he did not come to regret it. Later in the day he confessed to friends that the two and a half years he spent in Santiniketan were among the most valuable in his life. Once he landed in Santiniketan and came face to face with the work of Nandalal, Binodebehari and Ramkinkar he suddenly saw, as he told others later, that some modern Indian art was truly strong and virile. He enrolled to study painting although he never meant to become a painter. Rabindranath was still there during his initial year and half; though the few contacts he may have had with him could not have been any more than formal and distant, considering Rabindranath's age and ill health, and his youth and natural reserve. But the old man's presence was still felt everywhere. As things turned out Satyajit grew close to Mastermoshai (Nandalal), Binodebehari and Ramkinkar, particularly the former two. He recalled his experience in Santiniketan with a great sense of gratitude. 'It was there,' he said, 'that I learnt to look at nature, how to respond to nature and how to feel the rhythm of nature.' He was happy he came to Santiniketan in spite of his early misgivings. 'Santiniketan and Nandalal made me a convert in no time. And I am happy they did. Only an incomparable man and artist like Nandalal who could feel so sincerely and deeply about objects could impart this feeling to a pupil;' especially a pupil who came to him with more than a small measure of scepticism like he.

The Santiniketan experience was enriching to Satyajit in more ways than one. A city-bred young man, he had an exposure there to the ambience of the countryside. There his knowledge of music widened; while his friendship with Alex Aronson, a young professor of English who was a lover of European classical music, educated his understanding of this; he also heard much Indian classical music and Rabindra Sangeet. Discussions on art with bright and well-informed classmates like Prithwish Neogy and others broadened his perspectives on art. He also took advantage of Kala Bhavan's magnificent art library. And with the help of his teachers he got an introduction to Far Eastern art and calligraphy that they greatly admired. He also visited with his friends some of the major cultural sites of India, which left a strong impression. And over and above this, the many-faceted genius of Mastermoshai who thought of art in a large perspective and wanted artists to contribute to every aspect of life, not just hole up in their studios to paint or sculpt, he certainly found highly encouraging.

Circumstances did not permit Satyajit to complete his novitiate in Santiniketan. He was perhaps getting too restless to get back to the city and its air of excitement. And had realized at one point, like his friend Prithwish Neogy had too, that he did not have a vocation to be a painter or sculptor; what would suit him better was to put his existing talents to use and start earning a livelihood.

His career as a graphic artist started with his joining D.J. Keymer's, a reputed advertising agency of that time. With his many-sided talent, smartness and wealth of interests he was easily accepted. He started as an apprentice on a low pay, but it did not take him long to get to the position of an art director. Once so established he also went and worked in their London office for a few months. This visit provided him the incentive to change his boats in no distant future from graphic design to filmmaking.

The contours of graphic design were those days very different from today's. It was largely geared to the

promotion of a few consumer products and reached out to a smaller, and largely literate, public. It relied a lot on manual skills for making the visualization or producing the finished art work. This put a premium on technical proficiency and aesthetic sensibility and went further to give the message and its context a special cultural focus. It even encouraged creative artists to lend their talents to this process : for instance the London Transport System commissioned many established artists to do posters they could carry. In those days close monitoring of market expectation and market response had not assumed as much prominence as it has today.

In the circumstances, the agency was happy to permit Satyajit and some of his colleagues to give their work an indigenous image and flavour. Whether they were all motivated by the same intentions is hard to tell. To Satyajit it went beyond the selling points to the exploration of a visual language that would appeal to the newly culture-conscious nationalist middle class. His days in Santiniketan had changed him considerably. The focus of his interests, now, was less on commodity promotion than on fashioning a language of communication with cultural resonance. He refers to this in a latter-day lecture : 'If Santiniketan did nothing else it induced contemplation and a sense of wonder in the most prosaic and earth-bound of minds. In the two and half years I had time to think and the time to realize that, almost without my being aware of it, the place had opened windows for me. More than anything else it had brought me an awareness of our tradition which I knew would serve as the foundation for any branch of art that I wished to pursue.'

True, the work-scene in the agency had its own limitations. No talented or motivated designer could have a free run there without being intercepted by various kinds of advice, suggestion or objection from both clients and the executives. This irritated Satyajit. So he slowly diverted his talents to areas where such intrusions were few, if not entirely absent. The high point of Satyajit's graphic work is here—in his book jackets, in his innovative typography, in the posters and hoardings he designed for his own films and the scribbled visuals he made to help in the shooting of *Pather Panchali*. These show flair, taste, originality, playfulness and a power of invention hitherto rare in the Indian design scene.

That part of the impetus came from his tutelage in Santiniketan is patent. For instance his designs often recall Nandalal's designs— of logos, book jackets and illustrations for the Santiniketan publications, integrating function and aesthetic appeal with impeccable taste and economy. And contain within them a succinct intention to enrich the sensibilities of the viewer and arouse his interest in the visual environment. Satyajit had inherited a pronounced interest in educating the sensibilities of youth from his father and grandfather, by leading them into teasing encounters with ideas and situations. So he revived his grandfather's children's magazine, *Sandesh*, in 1961 and spent a lot of his later years writing delightful fiction for young people. No wonder that he extended this into pepping up and educating their visual responses as well.

But all these works were not directly related to the work in the agency, which he found progressively distasteful. 'I was fed up with client interference when *Pather Panchali* gave me a good reason to leave advertisement in the fifties. This interference was an affront to individuality,' he told some of his interviewers. A lot of these were done for the newly started Signet Press which made a big impact on the publishing scene in its early years. As already mentioned he continued such designing even after he had left the field of advertising. Taken as a whole these works have great variety. In some of his early illustrations to the children's version of the novel *Pather Panchali* (which exercise led him to think of doing a film based on the story)

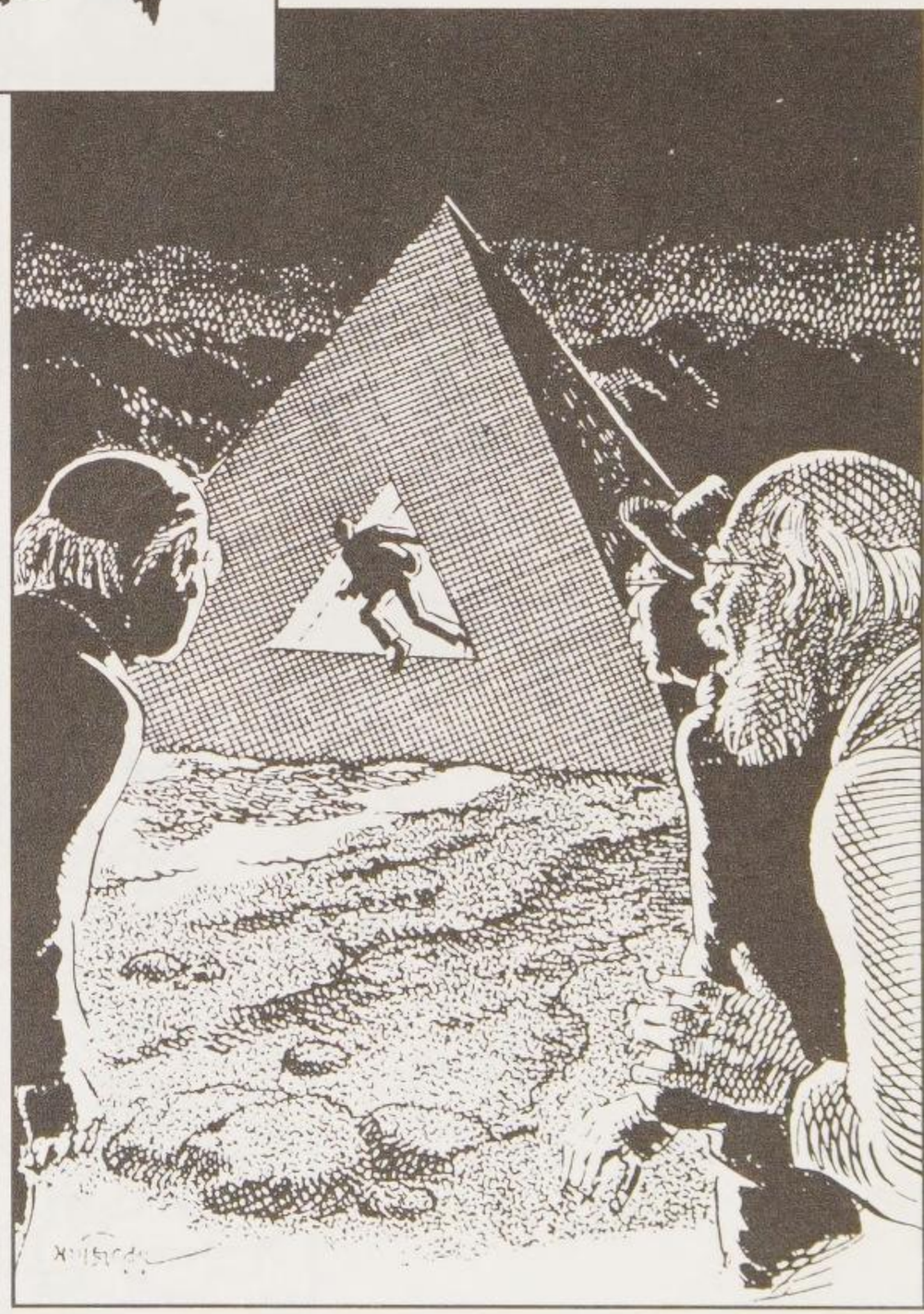
one can see certain similarities to the *Sahajpath* illustrations of Mastermoshai. In some of his book jackets one sees the impact of Mastermoshai's costume cut-outs for *Tasher Desh*. He also tried a hand, now and then, at brushwork illustrations reminiscent of Binodebehari's or Mastermoshai's work. But his scribbled visuals for the film *Pather Panchali* are of another kind; their chiaroscuro is dramatic, even photographic. His illustrations for *Sandesh* also show him foraying into various visual styles or idioms, e.g. medieval woodcuts, Japanese line drawings, caricature, comic strip. This versatility kept Satyajit's indigenizing effort from lapsing into over-decoration like those of some of his more zealous confréres. He was more inventive. He had a better sense of abstract balances. His play around with Bengali type units on the *Ekshan* covers makes a novel statement every time and are highly distinctive. And some of his posters for his films show great conceptual subtlety. For instance the one for *Gharey–Baire*, where the sharp shadow of Vimala slants out of the doorway and a red swirl of flame caps the caption, loading it with various innuendoes. Maybe there are various other examples one can cite, like the publicity material for *Devi* or its stylized logo, or the deceptively simple poster for *Teen Kanya*.

In his later years Satyajit was very guarded in his references to his graphic work; he only considered it a kind of passage that, through a series of accidents, led him to his chosen field, filmmaking, where he found himself and his well-deserved reputation as one of the masters of modern cinema. So when an enterprising young lady compered an exhibition of his graphic work in Delhi five years ago he was very humble and apologetic. In a small note in the catalogue he wrote, 'Since I consider myself primarily to be a filmmaker and, secondarily, to be a writer of stories for young people, I have never taken my graphic work seriously, and I never certainly considered it worthy of being exposed to the public.' Considering their impact, be it indirect impact on the graphic design scene in Bengal, especially in the field of book design and illustration, one may not take him fully at his word. There has been considerable liveliness and sense of novelty in the field of book design and illustration in Bengal since Satyajit's early days and he is certainly one of the path-makers. But his films, and their quality and appeal, are certainly a class part.

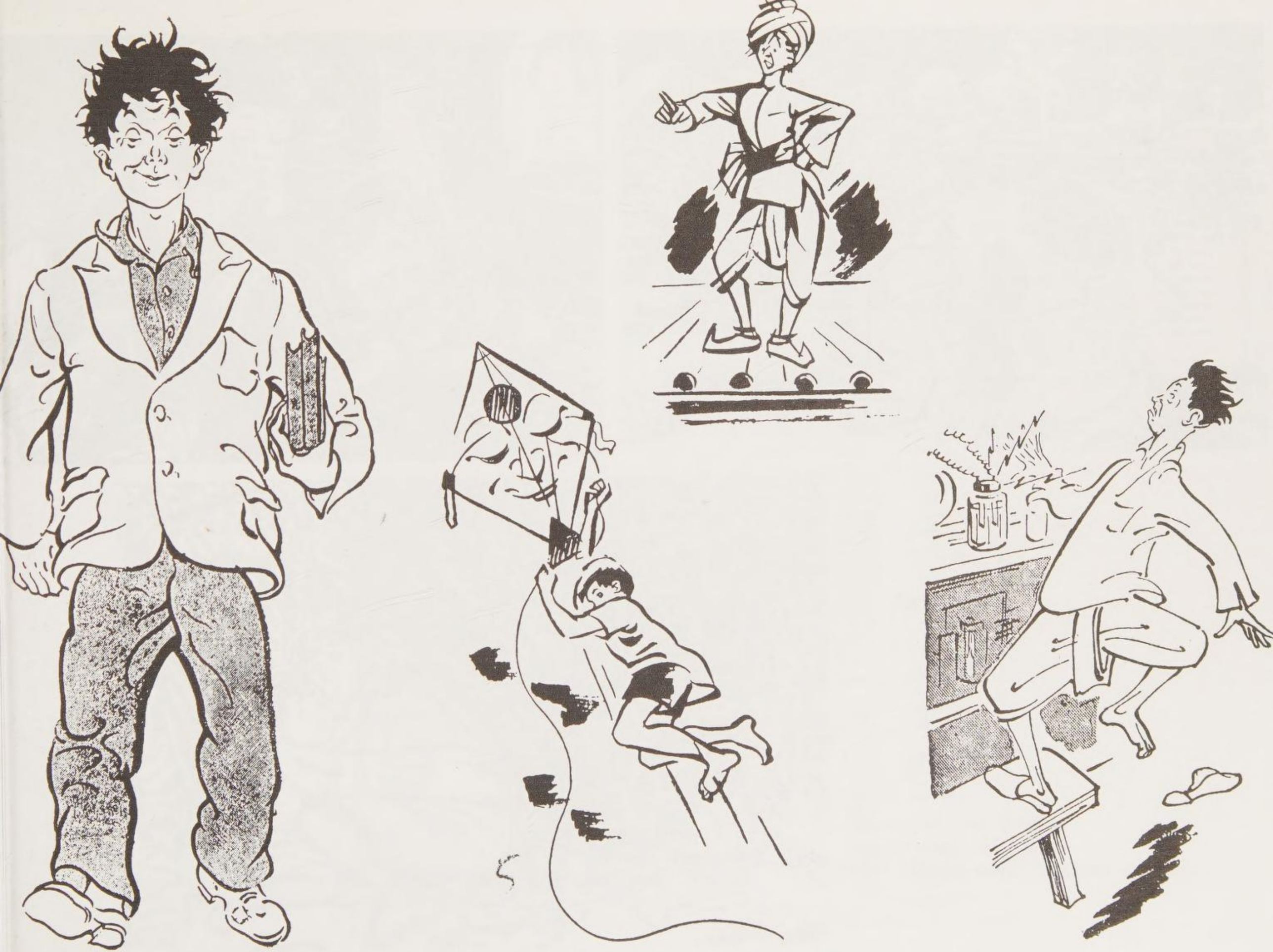
It will be wrong to think that Satyajit's graphic talent stops with his works on paper. His films too, at least some of them, reveal it in ample measure in the tone and texture of image or image detail, in the tone and texture of the general presentation, conjuring up an atmosphere charged with various shades of emotion, all on the basis of various kinds and grades of visual stimuli. *Pather Panchali* is replete with such details; so is *Aparajito* or *Kanchanjungha*. In his later films the focus is more directly on human drama than atmospheric details. Perhaps naturally so. For it is this drama that unrolls a message readily to the common viewer, while only sensitive connoisseurs get thrilled by the atmospherics and graphic subtleties. But his natural graphic sensibility surfaces in most of them here and there, from time to time. Possibly he may have felt that one can refine a viewer's sensibilities only through such a judicious inter-leaving, leading him slowly from reading a story to responding to the visual tapestry that supports it; that over-refinement might inhibit him and perhaps muffle the message.

Santiniketan, 1 November 1996

Illustrations for
his own books of stories



Illustrations for
his own books of stories



Illustrations for the Signet Press edition of Sukumar Ray's *Pāglā Dāshu*, 1946

Illustrations in woodcut
for *Ām Āntir Bhenpu*,
a children's version of *Pather Panchali*, 1944

Advertisement layouts for Paludrine, 1949

Ray Roman

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Daphnis

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BIZARRE

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
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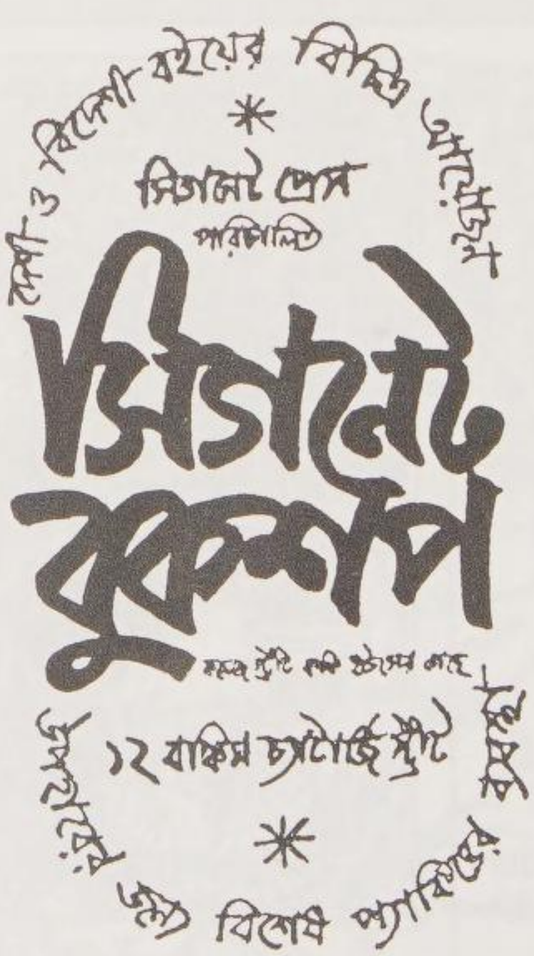
The types he designed — Ray Roman, Daphnis and Bizarre

Rough work for Lipton's advertisement, 1950 (Courtesy : Amal Ghosh)



Advertisements for Signet Bookshop

75

YEARS

Out of the pages of the sacred Vedas comes the well-known Hindu system of medicine — the Ayurveda. This Indian Pharmacopoeia which is older and more comprehensive than almost any other in the world has a rich store of medical formulae which have been found invaluable through centuries. The purity of their ingredients and the efficacy of the medicines have rightly earned them a lasting place in the cure of human ailments and in the alleviation of human suffering.

With this proud heritage we C. K. Sen & Co. Ltd., have served the people of this country for the last 75 years. The popularity of our products has given us the impetus to organise distribution of a complete range of medicines and drugs on a nation-wide scale, using time-tested ingredients of absolute purity.

C.K.SEN & CO. LTD.

JABAKUSUM HOUSE
CALCUTTA 12

MEDICINES · HAIR OILS · DRUGS

2 TEJ-O-BAL
The well-known nerve tonic and vitalising elixir during convalescence. Removes general debility and physical exhaustion.

3 JABAKUSUM TAILA:
The delicately perfumed medicated hair oil that nourishes and beautifies the hair. Also floral scented CASTOR OIL— ideal for setting the hair.

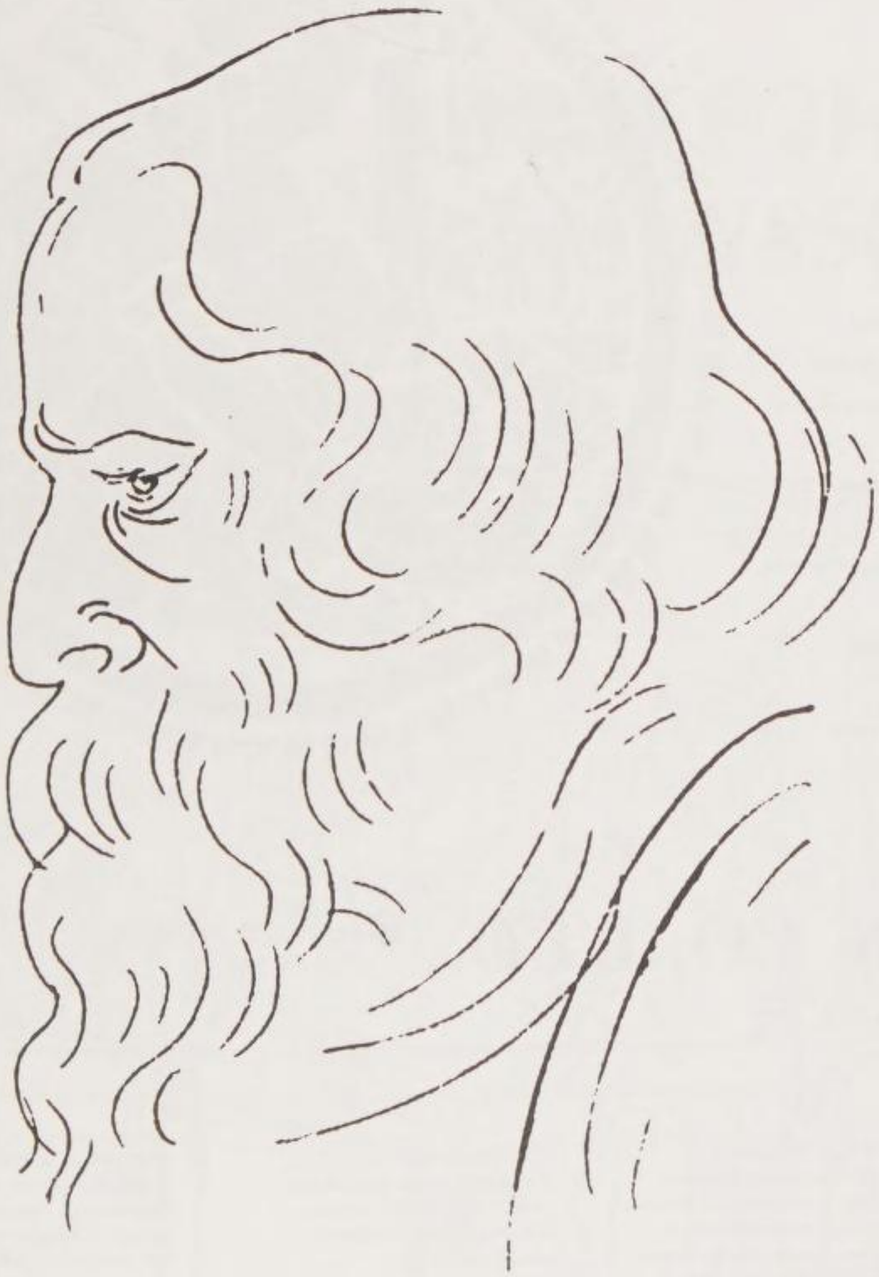
4 MAKARADHWAJA:
The Ayurvedic panacea. Taken with different anupans or vehicles, it restores the system from various ailments. Particularly good for stimulating the flagging heart.

5 ASOKA CORDIAL:
With vitamins and hormones. An effective remedy for all sorts of uterine and ovarian irregularities. A good tonic for women, especially after child-birth.

6 CHYABANAPRAS:
For troubles of the lungs, chronic cough, cold, catarrah, Asthma and other wasting conditions, specially in old age.

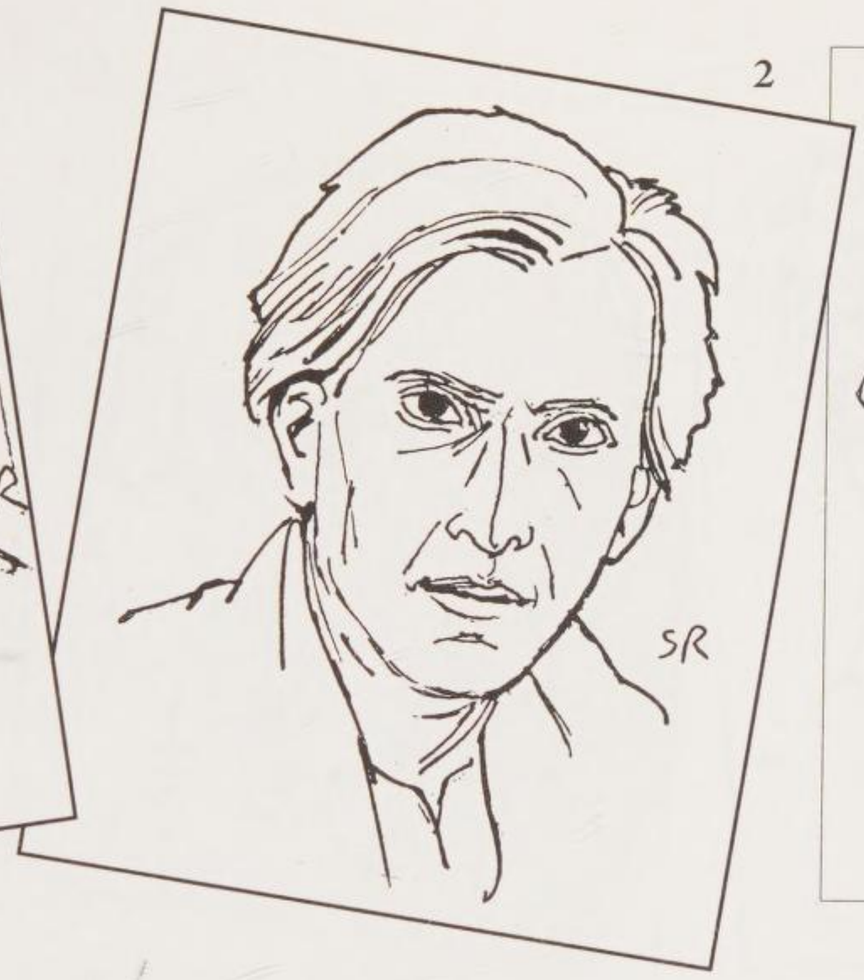
7 SURABALLI KASAYA:
A proved remedy in all sorts of obstinate skin diseases — acute or chronic. It helps to remove infection from the blood.

Advertisement for C.K. Sen & Co., 1953
(Courtesy : O.C. Gangoly)



Ray's sketches of Rabindranath Tagore

1



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Celebrity portraits by Ray:

1 Sri Ramakrishna
2 Saratchandra Chattopadhyay
3 Jamini Roy
4 Mother Teresa
5 Ramkinkar Baij
6 Nandalal Bose

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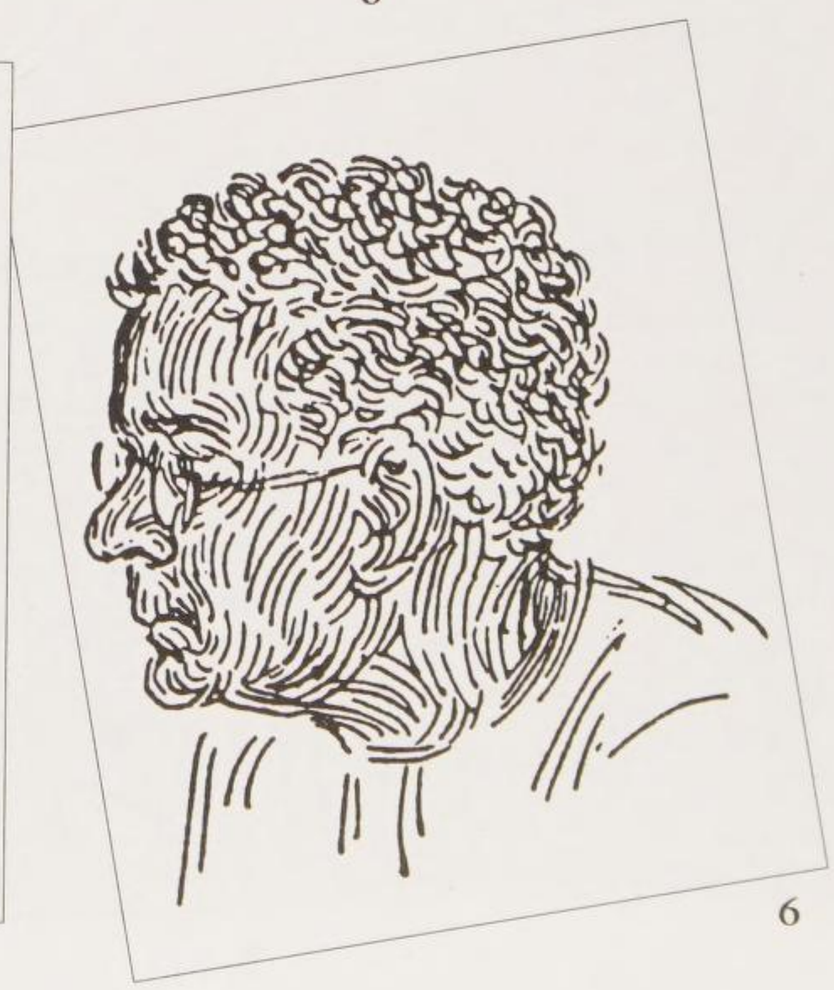
5



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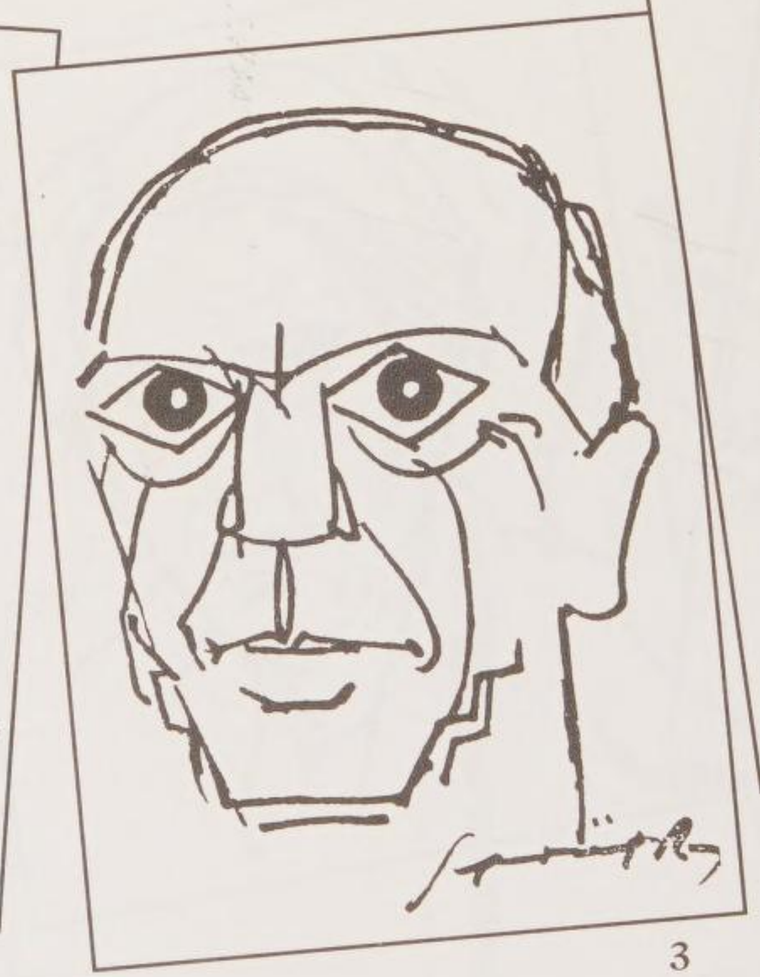

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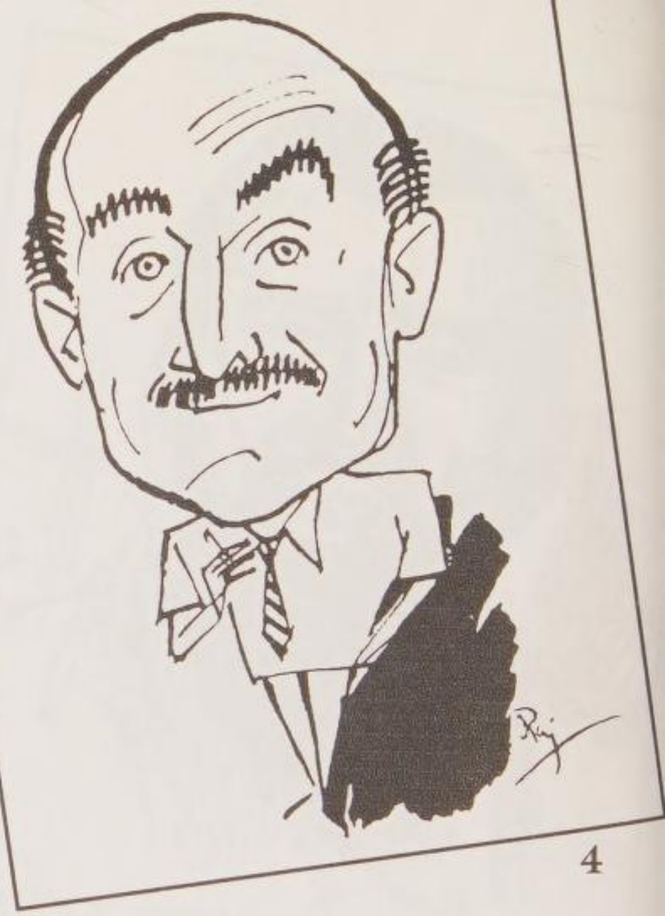

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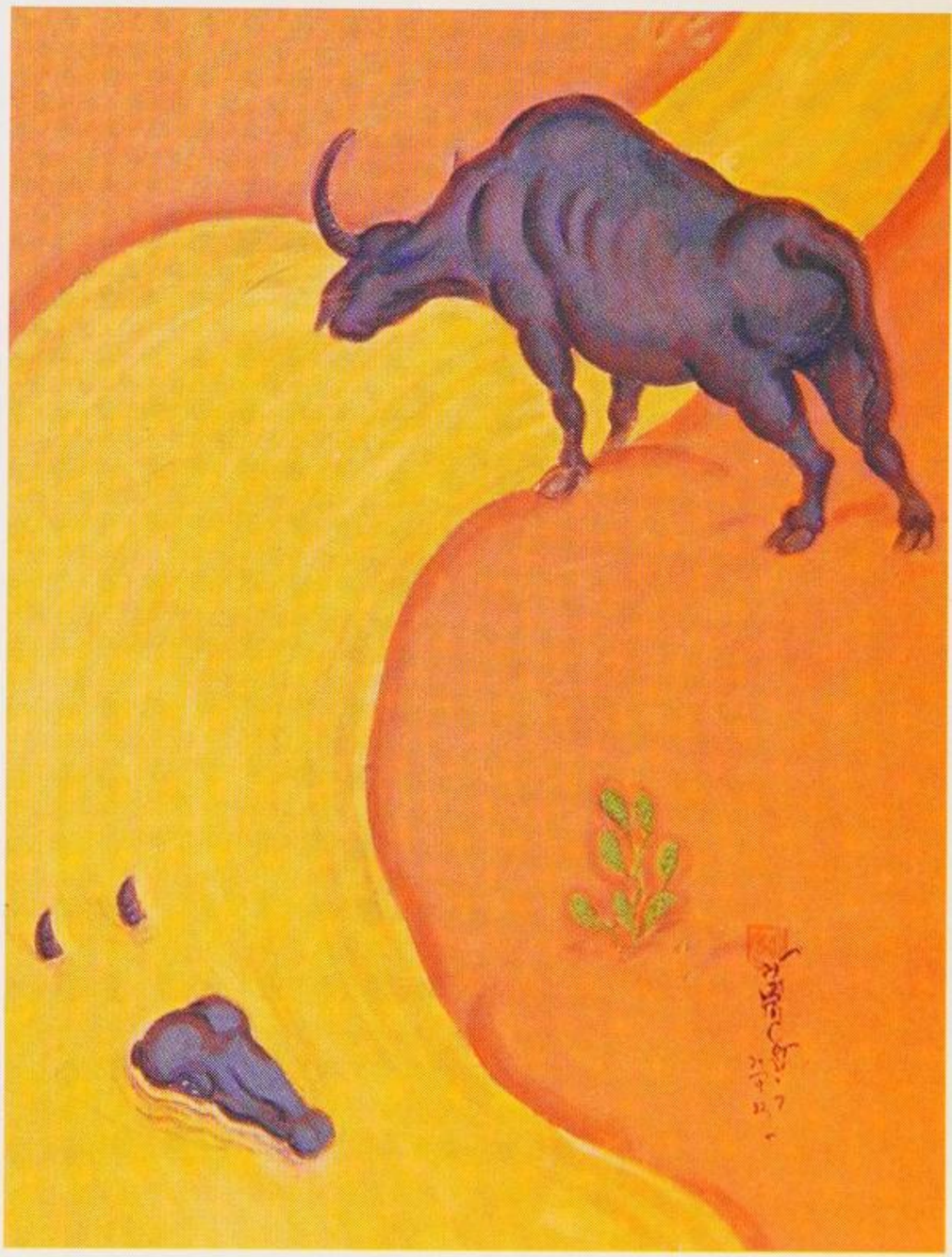
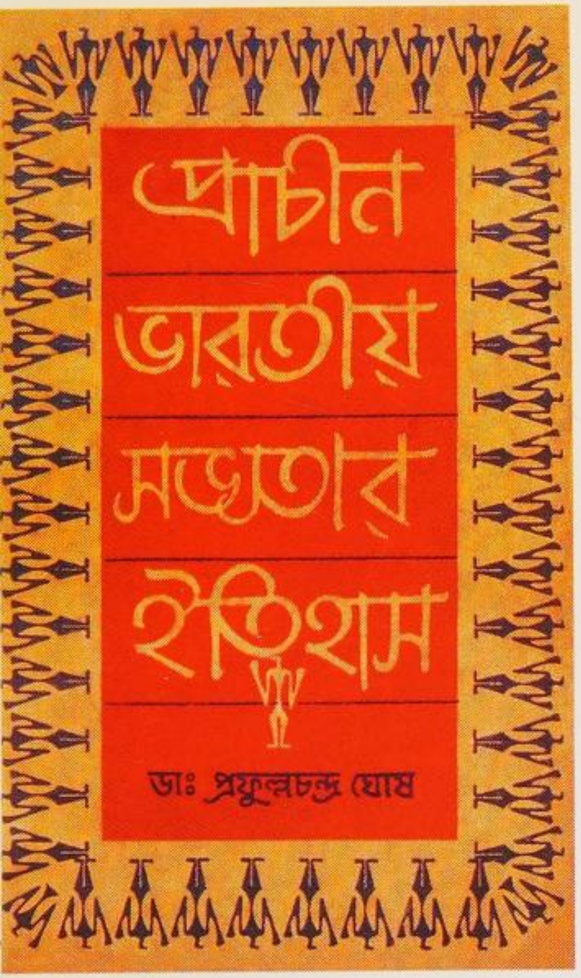
Celebrity portraits by Ray:

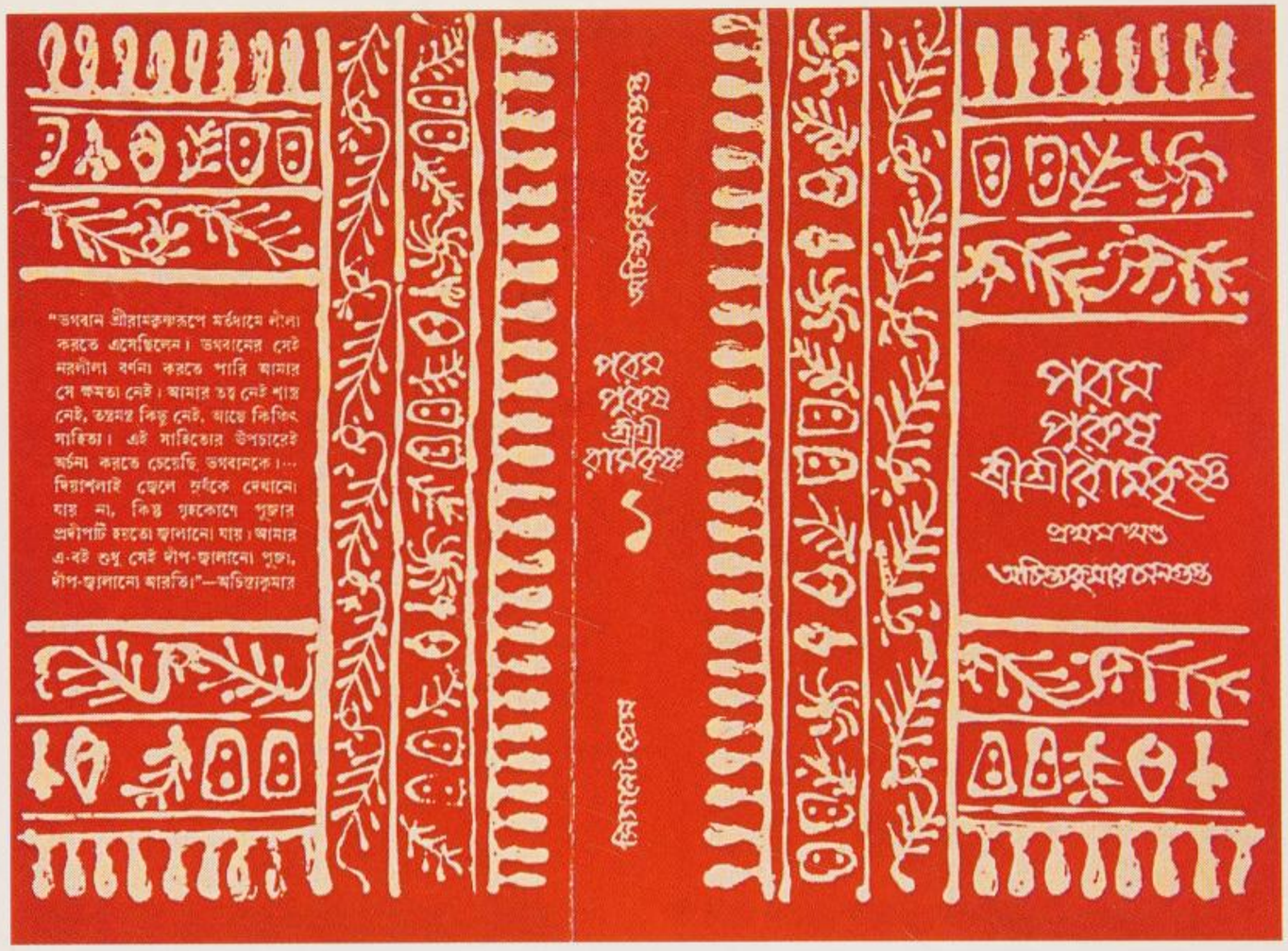
1 Abanindranath Tagore
2 O.C. Gangoly
3 Pablo Picasso
4 J.B.R. Nicholson
5 D.W. Griffith
6 Akira Kurosawa
7 S.M. Eisenstein

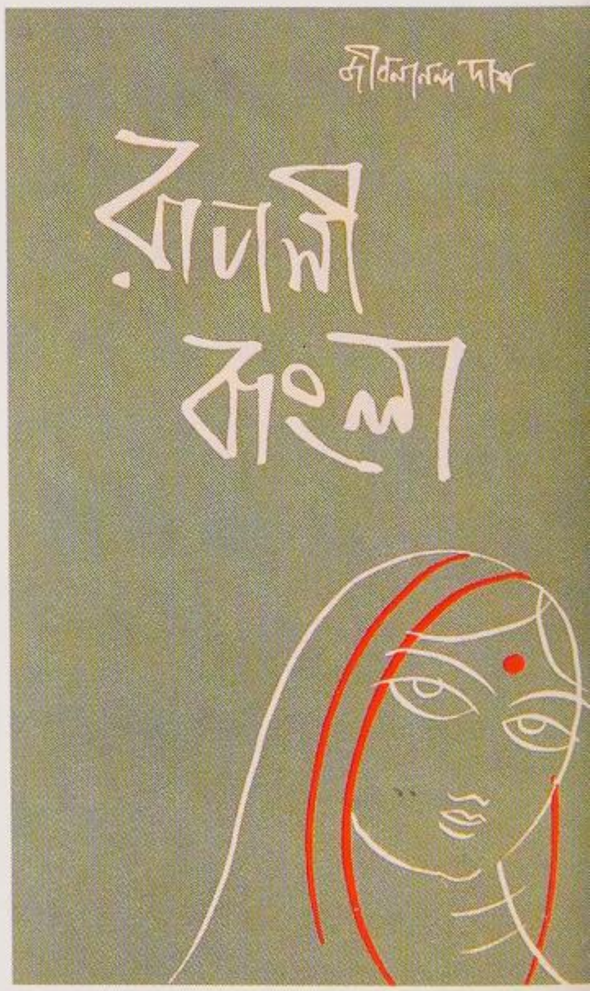


ABOVE. Rabindranath Tagore as a boy, taking a lesson in wrestling : as visualized by Ray in a painting for a Tagore centenary calendar released in 1961.
RIGHT. A water colour in the Japanese style, by Ray, from his Kala Bhavan days (1942) — a take-off on Ogatha Korin, the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries Japanese master.

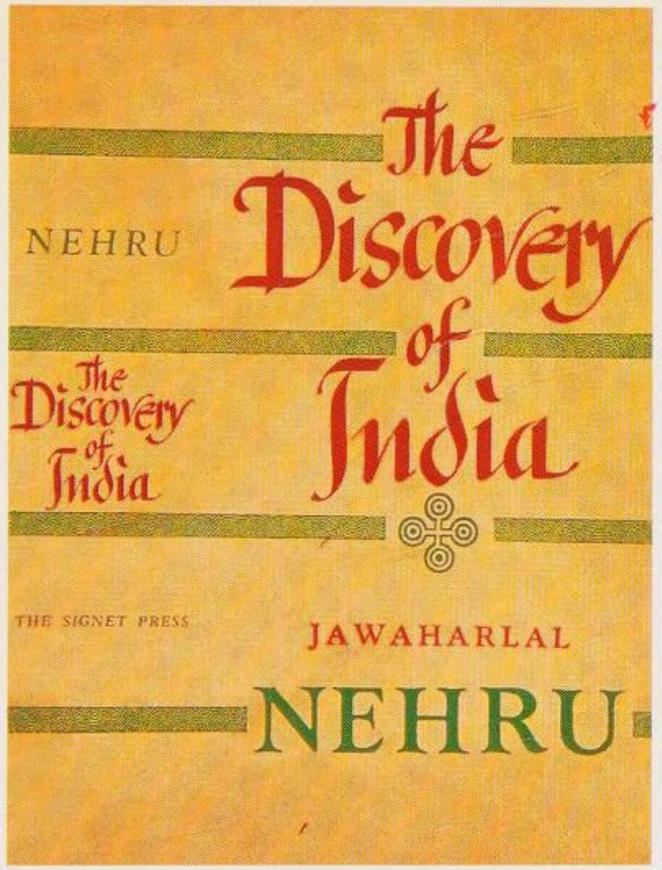


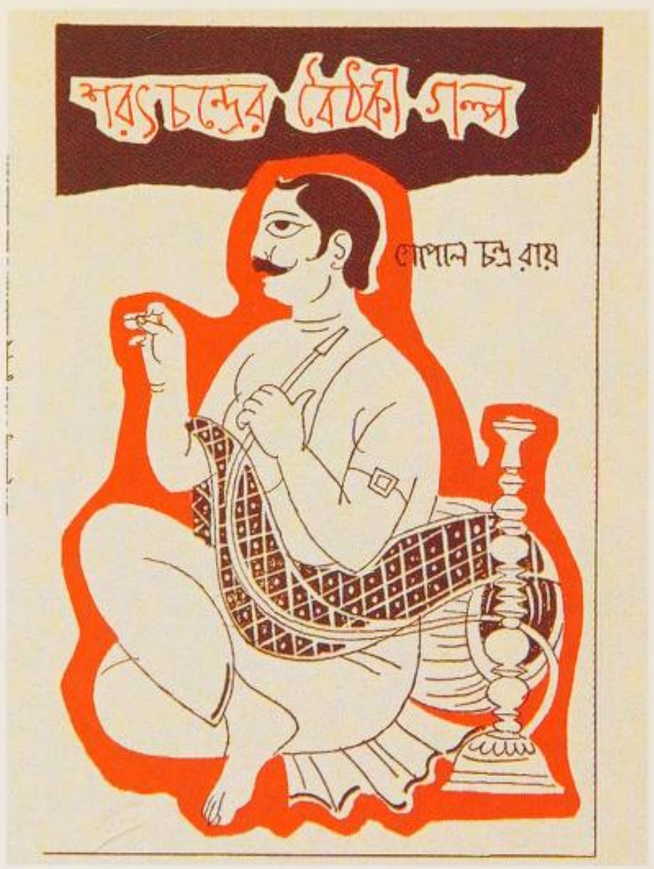
This design of a rose was presented by
Shri Satyajit Ray in honour of the
World Conference for Peace and International Cooperation.

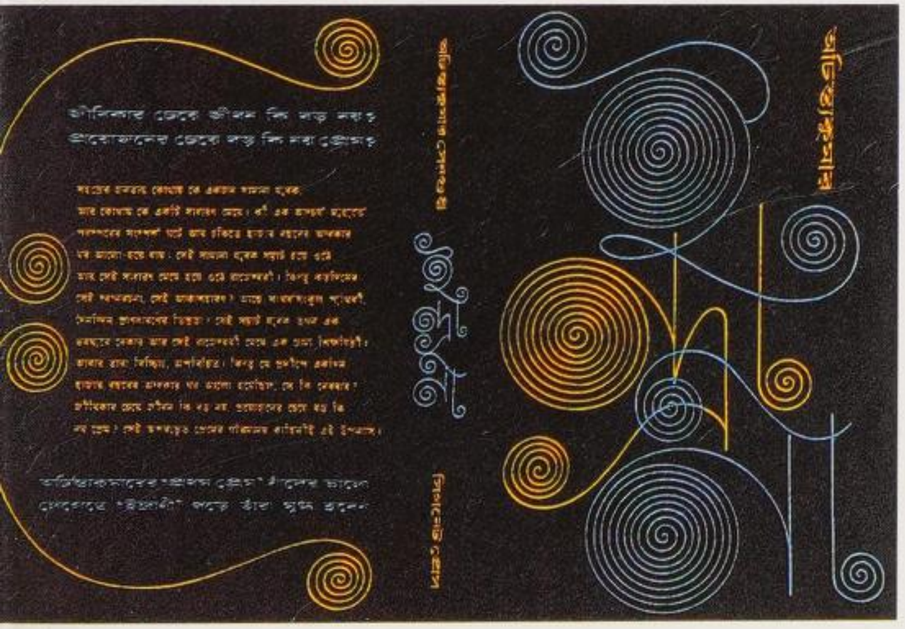


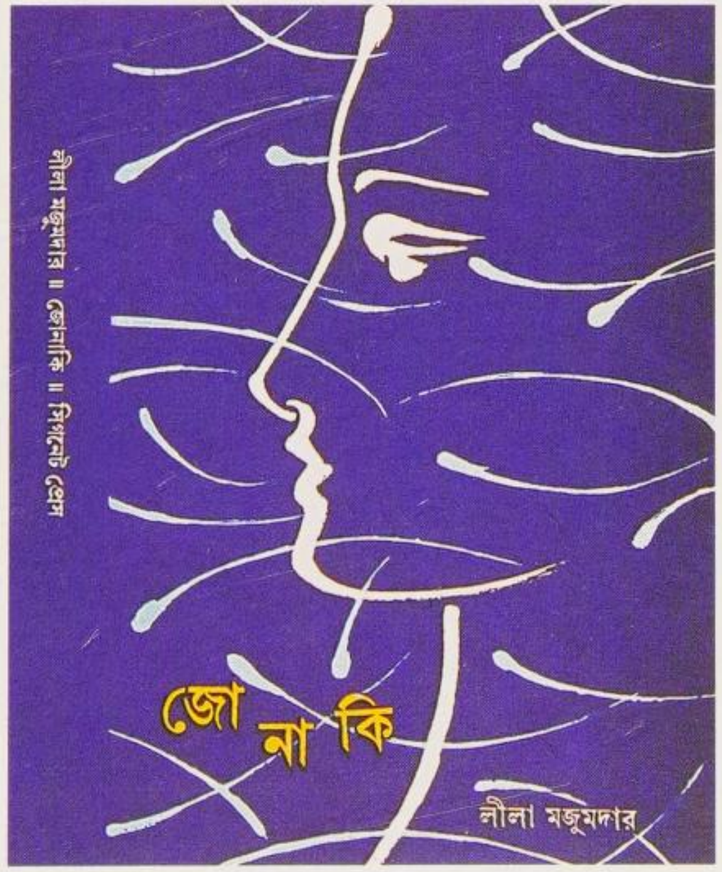


Book and folder covers by Ray. Top Left. *Prācheen Bhāratiya Sabhyatār Itihās* (1948) : a study of ancient Indian civilization by Prafulla Chandra Ghosh. Bottom Left. The red rose associated with Jawaharlal Nehru, drawn for a folder containing a poem by Subhas Mukhopadhyay, written at Nehru's death in 1964. Courtesy: Samik Bandyopadhyay. Above. *Parampurush Sri Sri Rāmakrishna* (1951), Achintya Kumar Sengupta's biography of Sri Ramakrishna. Right. *Rūpasī Bānglā* (Bengal Beautiful, 1957), a posthumous collection of poems by Jibanananda Das.





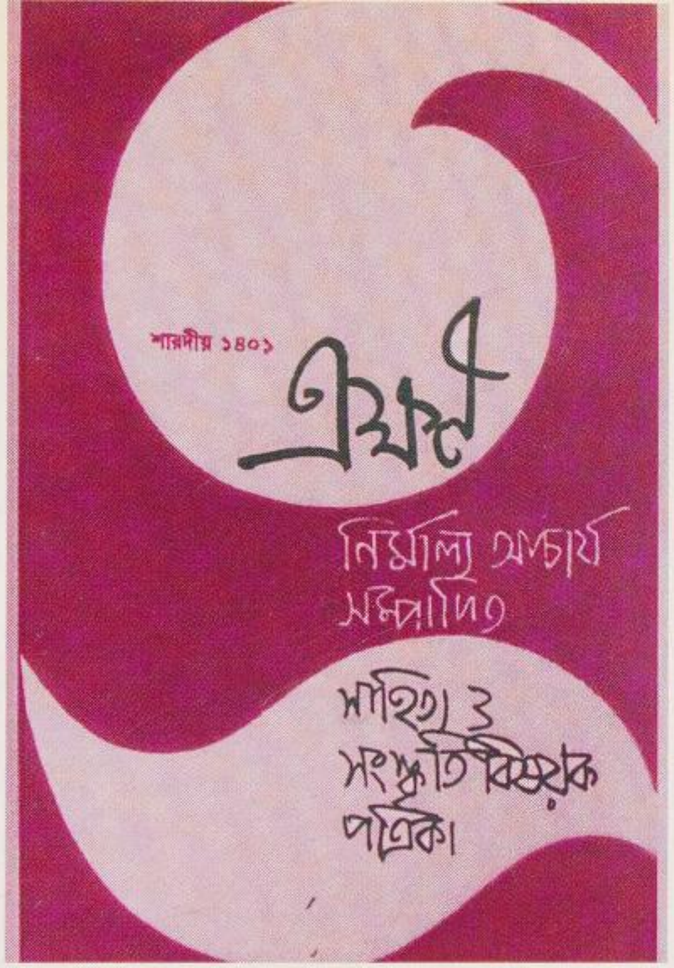


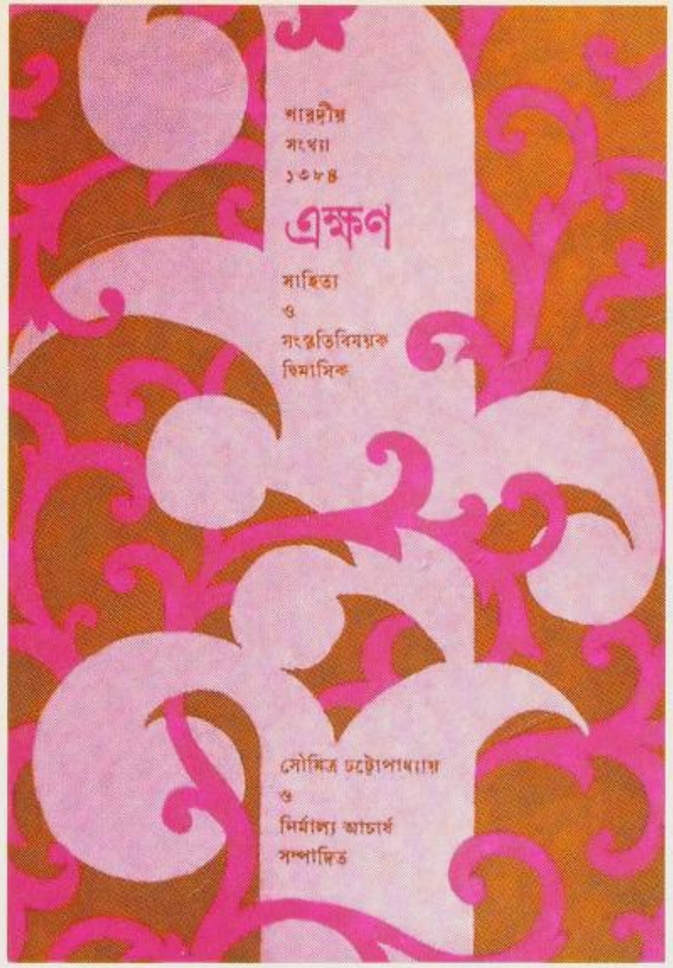


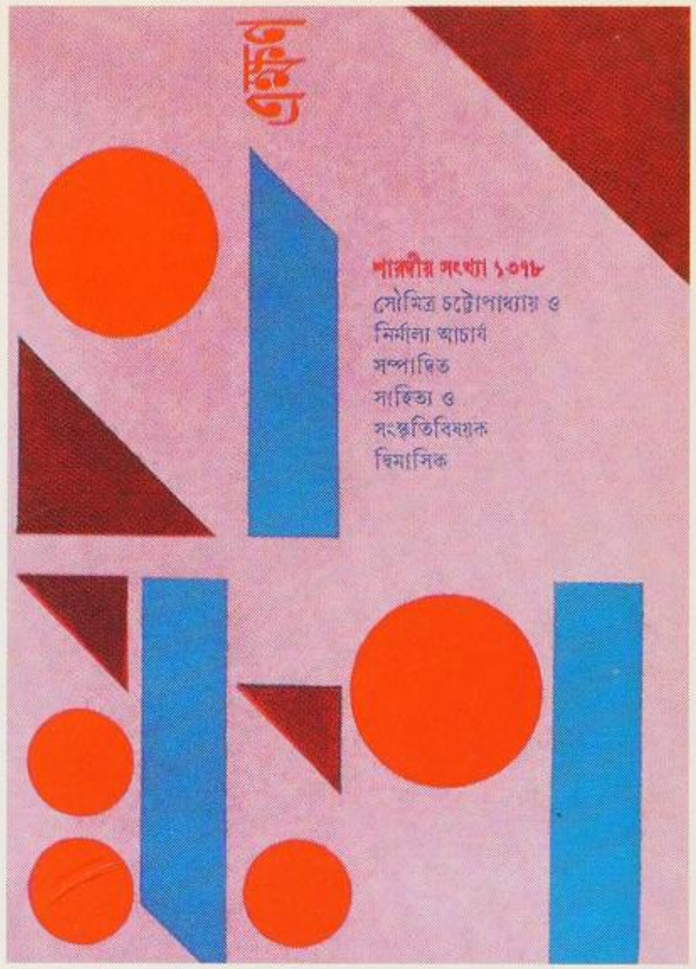
Book Covers designed by Ray. Top (Left to Right). Nehru's *The Discovery of India*, in a new edition; *Tuntunir Boi*, a collection of animal and bird tales by Ray's grandfather, Upendrakisore Raychowdhuri, in a new edition; *Sarat Chandrer Baithaki Galpa*, a collection of tales told by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, the eminent novelist, retold by Gopal Chandra Roy.

Bottom (Left to Right) *Indrāni*, fiction by Achintyakumar Sengupta; *Jonāki*, fiction by Lila Majumdar; and the *Ām Āntir Bhenpu*, a children's version of *Pather Panchali*, which Ray illustrated and, while illustrating, discovered its cinematic potential.

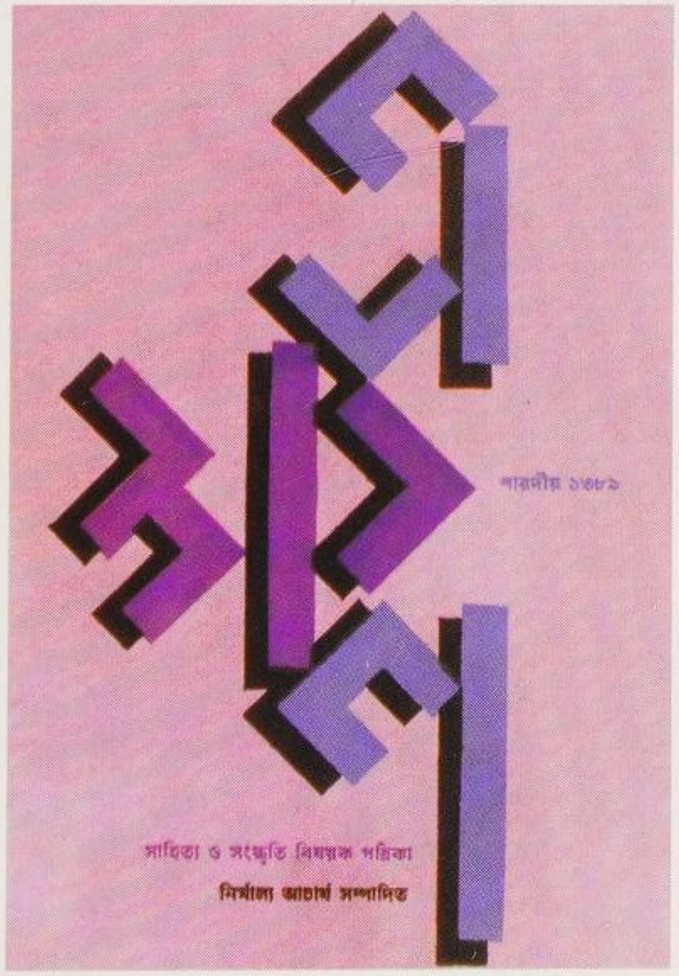
Covers — every one so different — for *Sandesh*, the children's periodical that Ray edited, with friends and relations.

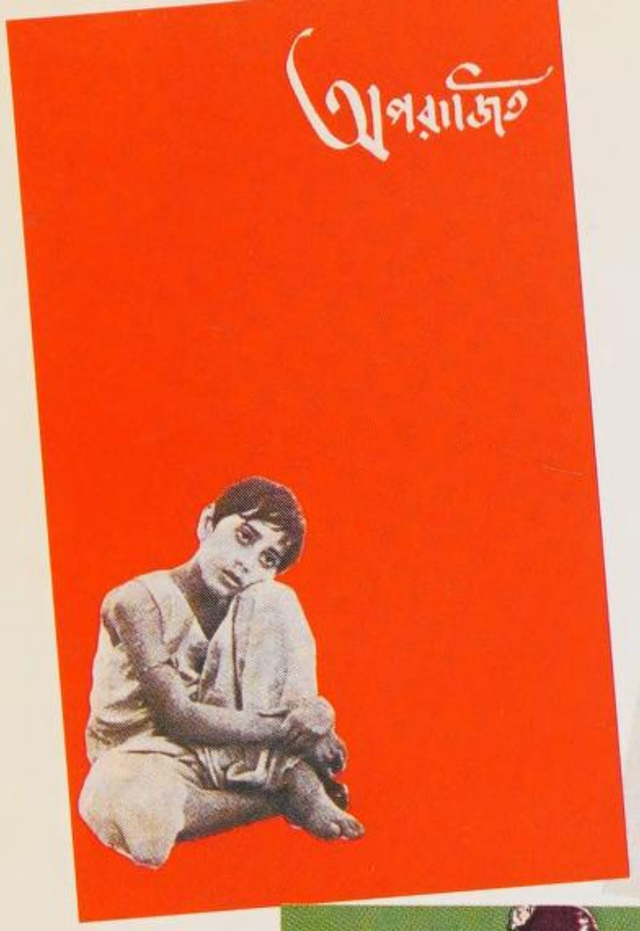


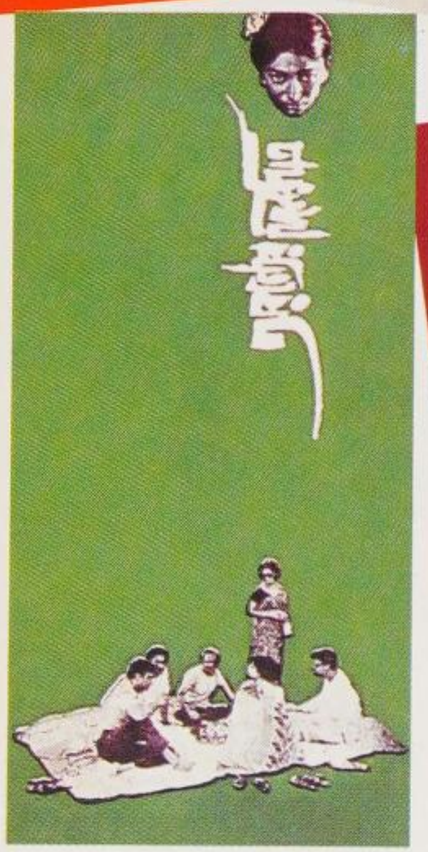


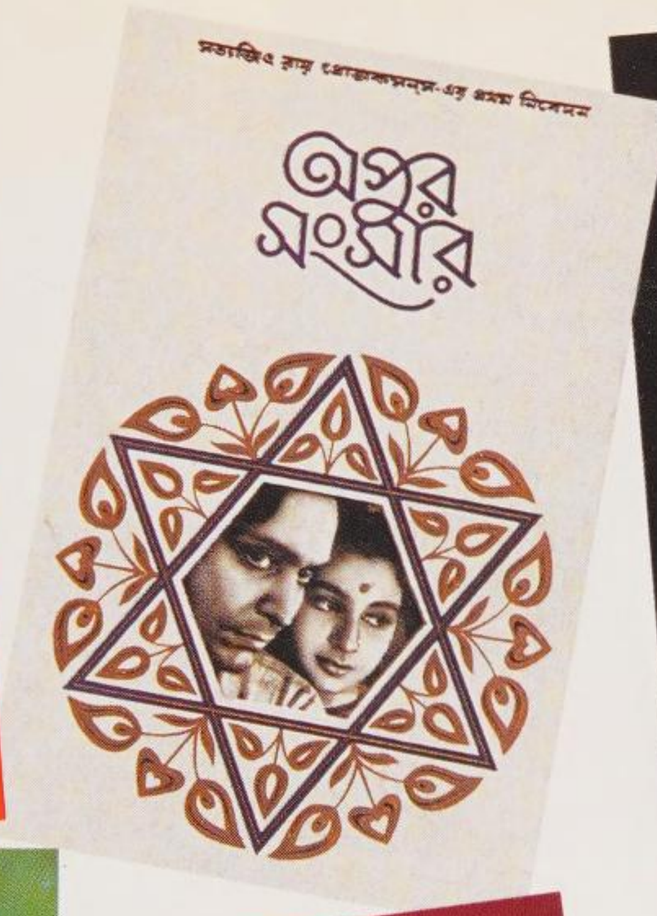


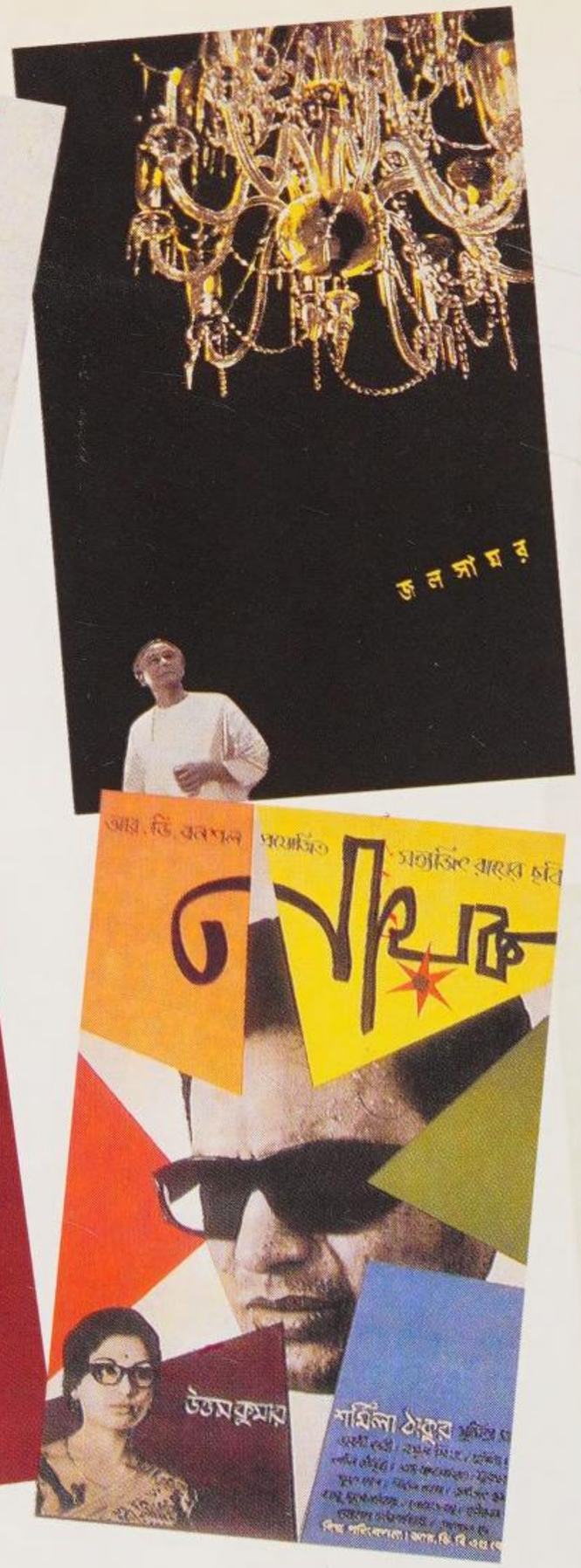
Covers for *Ekshan*, a periodical that carried the scripts of most of Ray's films, and some of his articles and reminiscences too.

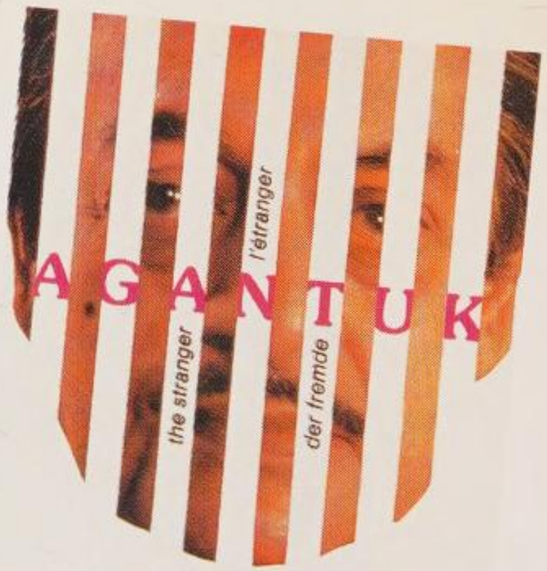




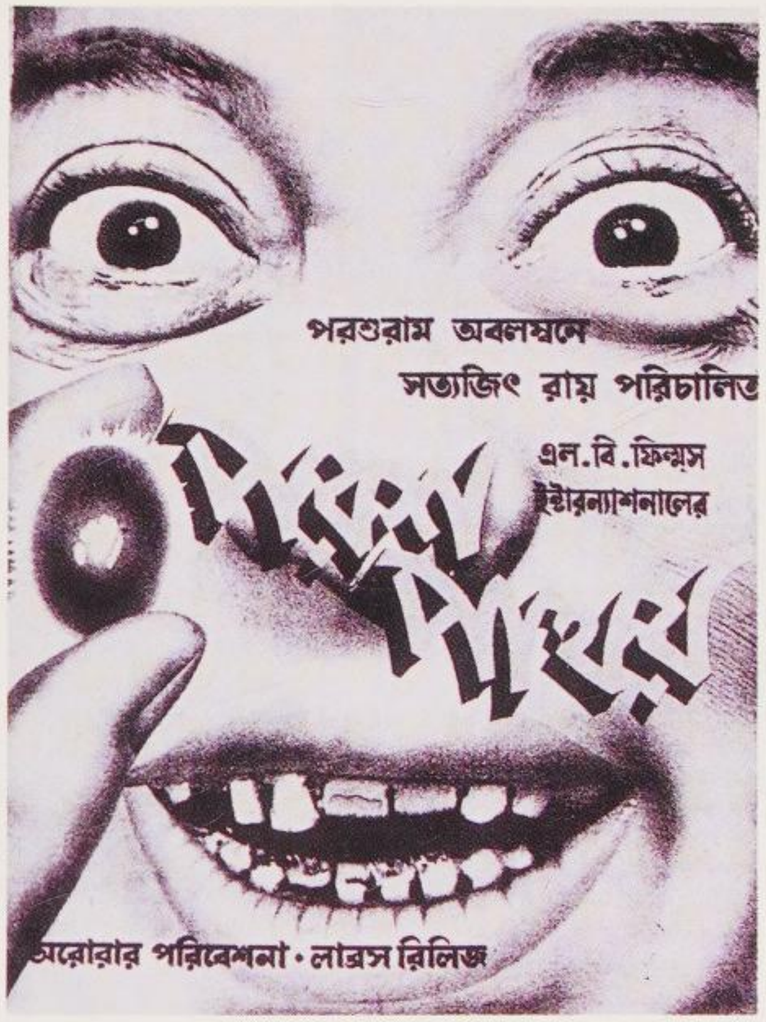


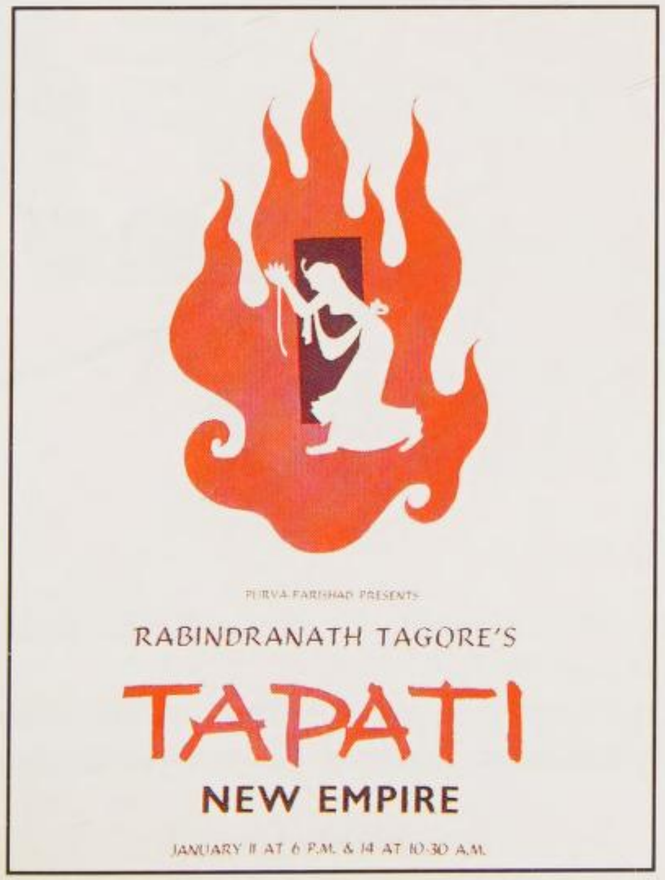




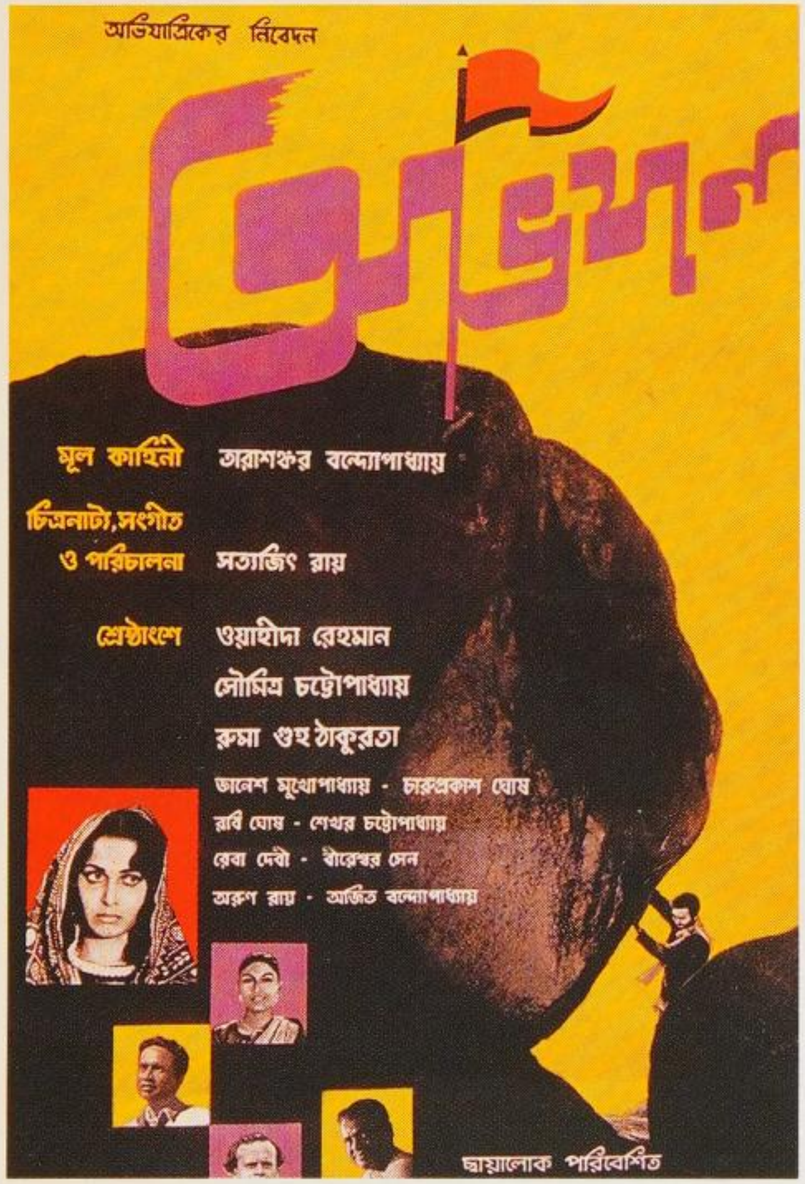


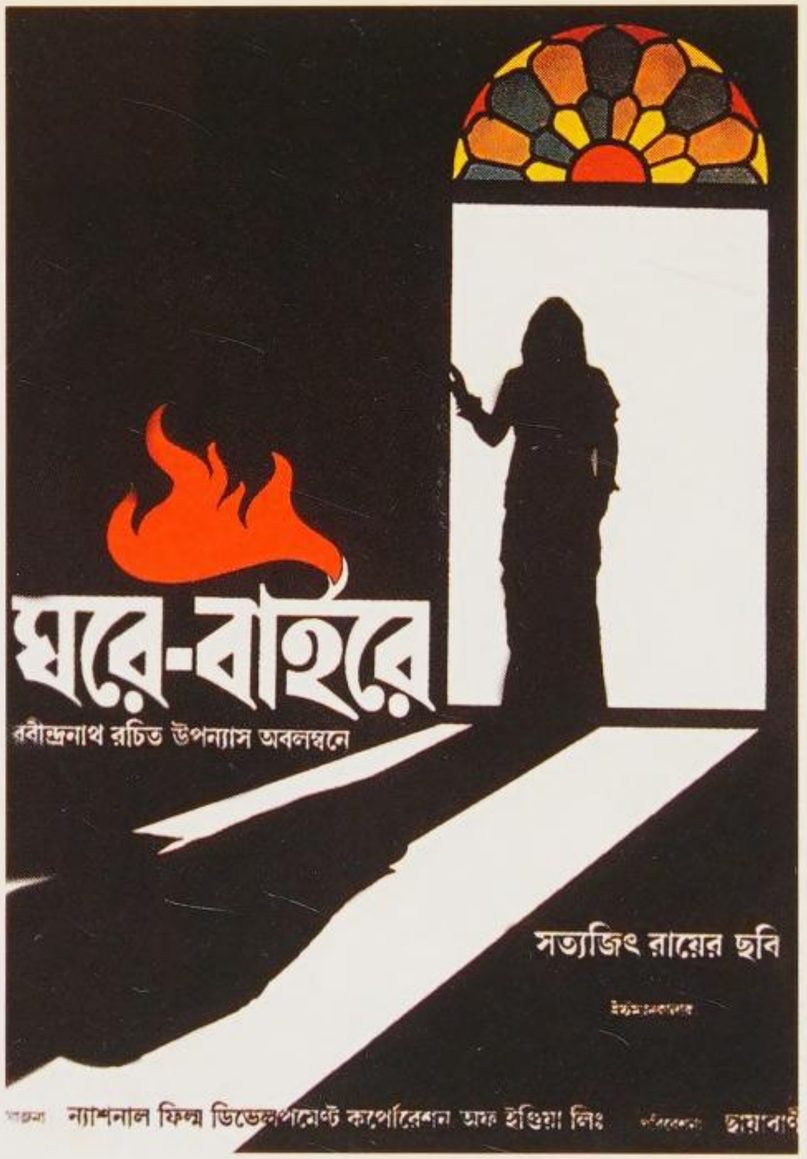
Brochures for his films designed by Ray, capturing the essence of every work.
TOP (LEFT TO RIGHT). *Aparajito, Apur Sansar, Jalsaghar, Agantuk*. BOTTOM (LEFT TO RIGHT). *Aranyer Dinratri, Teen Kanya, Nayak, Goppy Gyne Bagha Byne.*

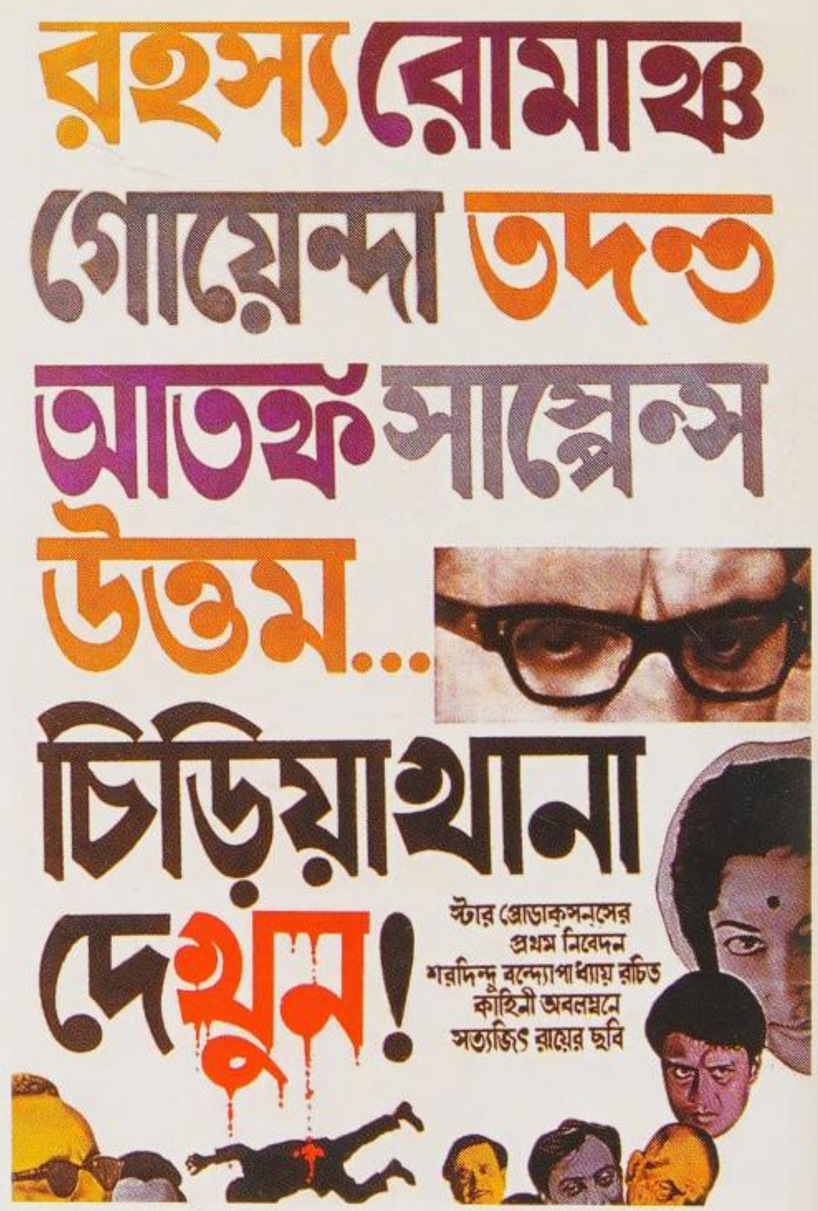




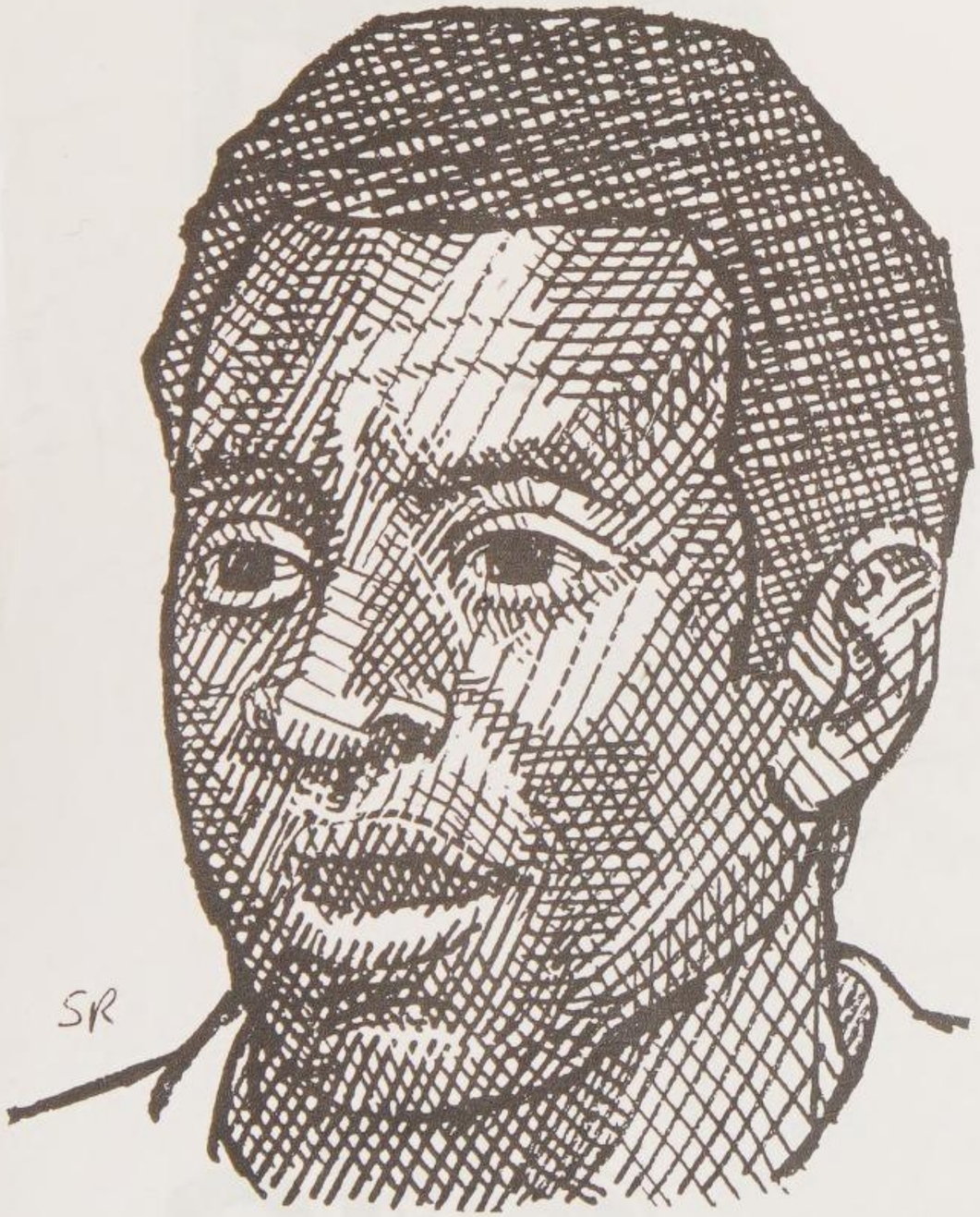
Posters and publicity material for his own films and a play produced by friends.
Top (Left to Right). *Kapurush O Mahapurush, Parash Pathar, Nayak.*
Bottom. (Left to Right). *Tapati*, a Tagore play produced by Purva Parishad; *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne.*



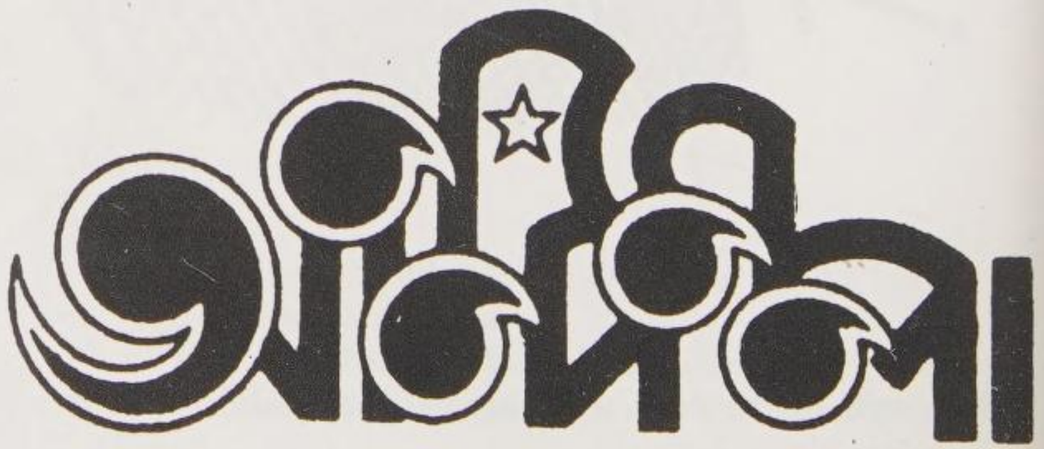




Posters and publicity material for his films designed by Ray.
TOP (LEFT TO RIGHT). *Abhijan, Gharey-Bairey, Chidiakhana.* BOTTOM. *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne.*

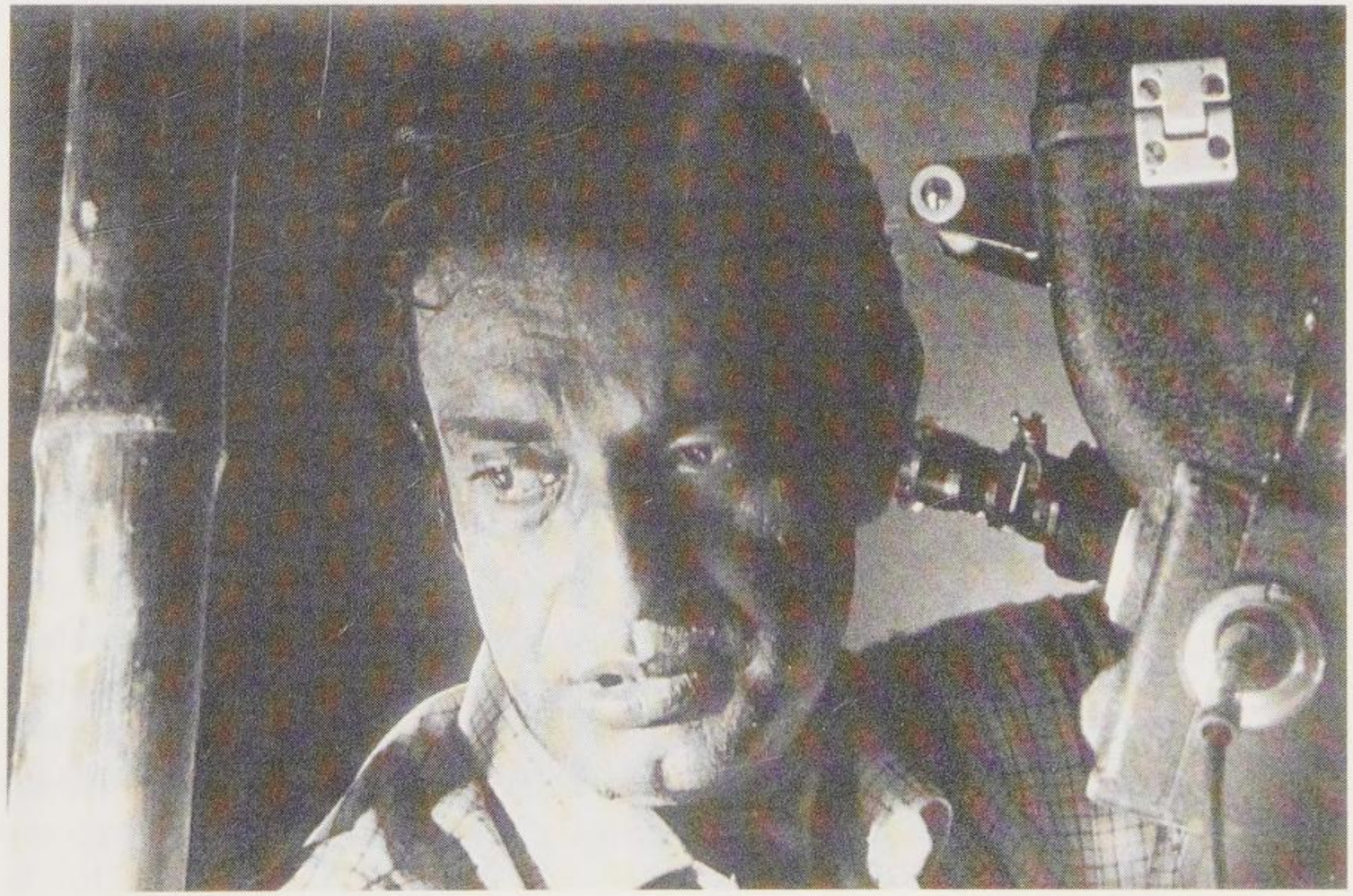


Pele — with reverence — and Nargis and Dilipkumar — with a touch of fun.



A logo for Nandan (ABOVE), a film centre in Calcutta, and mastheads (RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM) for *Desh, Bāromās,* and *Ānandamelā,* Bengali periodicals — all designed by Ray.

SATYAJIT RAY
filmmaker



In the beginning there was *Pather Panchali*

ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN

In recent years, I have been asked more than once to list the all-time greats of my choice in Cinema. I have every time found it next to impossible to limit my 'bests' to ten. In some of my lists, new choices *per se* replaced earlier ones. In this not-so-easy exercise, remarkably and justifiably, one film was constantly topping the list — Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*.

Pather Panchali, for me, marks the beginning of the true Indian Cinema — a beginning for all of us. It was not only a total negation of the soulless and superficial all-India Cinema indifferent to real people and issues, but also an affirmation of the emergence of the first consummate artist on the sub-continent's motion picture scene. So, for us all — ardent lovers of this dynamic medium of art — in the beginning there was . . . *Pather Panchali*.

And then there was the regional cinema coming to the fore asserting its rightful place on the national scene with genuine cinematic expressions mirroring meaningfully the motions of everyday life as lived and experienced by common people.

Pather Panchali made a total departure in the course of our Cinema in that Indian Cinema can be seen and studied now only in two major divisions : the Indian Cinema before *Pather Panchali* and the Indian Cinema after *Pather Panchali*. This one film, for the first time, for all Indians to note, asserted in no unequivocal terms that Cinema was an art and it could not any longer be relegated to a corner as a sheer vehicle of 'entertainment'. It suddenly widened the scope of Cinema. Its practitioners came to assume a higher status. Indian Cinema, in the true sense of the term, slowly started to gain confidence.

It was those novel and uncompromising works of Ray and his peers, most importantly Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen, that instilled a certain courage and spirit in the aspiring filmmakers who were to make an impact in their respective regions in the decades that followed.

Ray's influence on the filmmakers of the present generation is simply undeniable; even those who haven't been fortunate to study his works formally in an academic institution have managed to get access

to them at special festivals and Society screenings. His films became the hallmark of quality in our Cinema. And no serious practitioner of the medium could afford to ignore them. They came to be looked upon as the models of accomplishment in film art. Thus virtually made into a reference of quality, every film of note from other filmmakers tended to be scrutinized and assessed as either 'as good as' or 'not as good as' or very often 'nowhere near' Ray.

While historically there is no denying the fact that *Pather Panchali* was Ray's best, the film that moves me most deeply every time I watch it, is *Aparajito*. I cannot help tears welling up in my eyes as I watch with profound empathy the relationship between the mother and the son unfolding in a saga of pain, isolation, love, longing and death.

I have my favourites even amongst Ray's so-called minor films. We have nothing in our Cinema which can be compared with the sweetness and charm of those films Ray made for teenagers. *Sonar Kella, Joy Baba Felunath, Goopi Gyne Bagha Byne, Hirak Rajar Deshe* — all vibrate with wit and wisdom, magic and mystery, and imagination and adventure no child or adult can ever resist to be enthralled by. They are meant for children of all ages who have not lost their innocence.

Ray's last films, *Ganashatru*, *Shakha-Prashakha* and *Agantuk* (here let me take the liberty to group them together as the 'moral trilogy') were reflective of his anxious concern at the erosion of values fast eating into the vitals of the society. The artist who came on the scene saluting life with the sad and sweet saga of Apu in a historic trilogy was bidding goodbye to his audience with a pang of pain in his heart. The society, as seen, lived in and portrayed in these films is a degenerate one; it has come a long way from the quiet and dignified life of the pristine past.

The 'City Stories', *Mahanagar*, *Pratidwandi* and *Seemabaddha,* legitimately belong to the present. They talk about the incompatibility of old values with the practicable attitudes and postures in a changing world visibly different and indifferent to finer sensitivities.

Jalsaghar, *Devi*, *Charulata*, *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*, *Gharey-Bairey* and *Sadgati* — the period films — exude the grandeur and gentility of a time past — romantic, nostalgic yet inevitably bound to change and transform.

Aranyer Din Ratri and *Kanchanjungha* take the characters away from their natural moorings — the wilderness of the city — and place them against unfamiliar settings — the bountiful elemental nature — weaving chiaroscuros of human passion, foibles and penitence.

There are of course quite a few other films, like *Abhijan*, *Chidiakhana* and more importantly, *Ashani Sanket* which defy easy categorization and analysis. All the same, there is no Ray film, short or minor, which would not impart the viewer the joy of unmitigated aesthetic experience.

For me, watching a Ray film is always revealing and rewarding, no matter how many times I have seen it before. Coming to think of it, of how many world masters can one say this ?

Ray : The Character and His Image

CHARLES TESSON

It is the story of the family interlaced with authentic biography and the strange accuracies which enrich the works of Ray and give us the scope of *dehiscence* [exploration, dissection].[1] Very clearly on the narrative level, the work is naturally extended like a heritage. It is on the level of the actor that he opens up the individual character and the story.

Ray's cinema has been called biographical commentary, leading to a search for the various correspondences between his life (the genealogical tree) and his work. Then why do the sentiments that are stretched by Ray act as a snare ? The interpretation of his work (for which he deserves to be studied) often shows the evidence of a biographical line and his constant intrusion. This is done inevitably from a pivotal point which polarizes the life of the film : the recognition of the two actor-characters. Young Apu does not tell us anything about the childhood of Ray (neither the milieu nor the circumstances). But the famous scene of *Pather Panchali* where Apu waits, for the first time, for the sound of the train tells us something about him. The scene takes place at night and the child is facing the camera. He is sitting by the side of his father, busy with his homework. The child is seen writing something. The sound of the train disturbs his writing and his ears are stretched to catch the sound. The camera travels towards Apu, isolates him and focuses on the face—a face that listens to the sound and stands out for what Ray wants to depict : the progress (the railway track) and the proximity of the town and everything it represents. (In Ray's house the ears are bigger than the eyes, the ear searches far away.) The scene where Apu is isolated from the image of his father, due to the sound of the train, opens up a space for the child—this is a space which his father has already travelled before him. He is often absent in *Pather Panchali,* always going away or coming back, and the train puts Apu on the same track. These are called the rhythmic movements between the country and the town *(Aparajito).* The sound of the train brings in a new tragedy in Apu's life — a rupture and an overture (once again a term from Botany). But what is important is that he constructs an image that was originally connected

[1] One recalls the botanical process of the closed organs opening themselves to offer a passage for their reserves.

with the father and the child. This is as if Ray, since his departure (his journey within, the cinema) is keen to register the basic line of writing and the book which laid the foundation from Upendrakishore to Sukumar Ray. Contrary to his covert flashes of biography, the time for planning, the tingling sensation of the feeling of a real indication, clearly exposed, are confined to the *Branches of the Tree (Shakha–Prashakha)* in the form of a maze that is scattered all over. (The advocate for biography, catching a glimpse of this already, picks up quickly a hallucinatory dimension in Ray's house.) If the 83-year old man recalls the old woman Indir of *Pather Panchali* after an interval of 35 years, the father figure shows a striking similarity with Ray. This is brought out by the age (the character has been in the film for 70 years like Ray) and the physical appearance (the profile, the physical appearance are arranged feature by feature) and some correspondences are kept up by the scenario : the character is well known in his locality, the birthday-celebration, the biography to which he is devoted, the journalist who is going to interview him after he has been prepared for the heart-attack. If the character is close to Ray (love of work, sense of values), he is not completely like him. The same applies to Prashanta, interpreted by one who has created Apu. Certain biographical traits of Apu remind us of Ray (visit to London, love of Western music). But there is a difference — one lives for his art without doing any work and the other lives only for his work. Apu is shut up within his art and this does not conform to the image Ray creates through his films. In this respect, Prashanta will be in the line of Apu, who is himself in the last film of the trilogy (It is the same actor, Soumitra Chatterjee, twenty years later). But here we have an Apu who, contrary to the character in the film, cannot cast aside his story in his ambition to reconcile himself with life. (He has to accept the death of his wife and acknowledge his child.) He goes on nurturing his attachment to art (his story comes to an end), isolates himself completely from the social environment, without being concerned about other people (his son) and plunges into a state of folly. Prashanta is rather in a fix in an unproductive state and shows a conception of an art that is sterile.

Another character of *The Branches of the Tree,* who is more self-effacing than what the father and the son would like him to be, shows some biographical features of Ray's life. It is the youngest of the four, Pratap, as one learns in course of the film (he is the only one who is seen to stir), who gives up his job at the office to pursue the career of an actor — an experience Ray had known before he came to the cinema. Ray was not satisfied with stretching horizontally the vertical scheme which ties up the film (the two brothers who had chosen art and the other two who continued the father's environment revealing all his values). The main scheme which rounds off the film is the opposition between the world of the father (it was an industrialist who helped him succeed) and that of a son (the music and his ignorance of the world). This was because of the scene in which Pratap announces

to Prashanta — this is the strongest and the most beautiful moment in the film — the new profession which he chooses thwarts all expectation. One will rightly believe that he will be able to bridge the gap between the father and the other two brothers by the words announced by Pratap ('profession of the actor'). For a second, Prashanta is deaf and cannot hear as he had heard earlier. Then he shouts out and rejects his brother's proposal. He is sent out of the room because the word was connected with art which made the brother extremely contemptuous. From all these evidences, Pratap had every reason to go against Prashanta — a survivor from the old tradition and surpassing even the autocracy of the zamindars. This was not merely because he had inherited the tradition of Apu (Apu had cast away his novel). It was because he had entered the world of art, enriched by his experience of the world (his life in society, the reality of the corruption — this was something which had come down from Somnath in *Jana Aranya*). But this was also due to the fact that for Ray, true art is that which can prove the social bond. Each film of Ray is an experience of this bond — a search for an equilibrium between the individual (the past, the present and the imaginary), the neighbourhood and the surroundings in which he lives — Calcutta and the Bengali community. For Ray, making films is an apprenticeship for this social bond — he writes another story through his films.

Ray has dispersed each individual in *Shakha Prashakha* beyond the implicit portrayal, taken up all the stages of life and has depicted a particular point of time. The image of brilliant portrayal of characters in a particular period in which their relationships are formed — a continuous biography — may be traced to the final scheme of *Apur Sansar (The World of Apu)*. The world of Apu was made with the presence of both Apu and the child whom he carries on his shoulder. At the end of an era, which opens up to another, the portrait with the two faces is a figure which gives a sense of movement — the impression of past, present and future. The individual expressed through a brilliant portrait is a mirror of the time and the figure of reconstruction. The work of Ray is made from all the possibilities of one individual — all the different points are explored one by one. One sees *Seemabaddha* through the central character who presents something like a framework in a Westernized society. He is almost like a self-portrait of Ray who tries to look at the time portrayed in the film (the imaginary and the real)— something which we would not have seen if Ray had never left his office to make films.

Excerpted from Charles Tesson, Satyajit Ray, *Paris : Cahiers du Cinéma, 1992. Excerpt chosen by Gaston Roberge, S.J. Translated from the original French by Nandini Das.*

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE LRC

Satyajit Ray : True-to-life imagemaker

GASTON ROBERGE

1

The greatness of Satyajit Ray as a filmmaker consists in having taken the culture of Bengal — as handed down to him by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay and Rabindranath Tagore, in particular — one big step ahead into the realm of cinema. Compare Satyajit Ray and Dadasaheb Phalke. When Phalke saw the life of Christ in a film, he immediately sensed the possibility of projecting images of Hindu deities onto the screen. His reaction was that of a Hindu nationalist. When Ray saw the neorealist films of post-World War II Italy, he discovered a means of expression that greatly appealed to him. His reaction was that of an artist. Phalke contributed to the creation of an Indian film industry; Ray, the humanist, contributed to world cinema. His films, from *Pather Panchali* to *Agantuk*, portray men, women and children who are fully Indian and yet are recognized as their brothers and sisters by people the world over.

Because Ray discovered in the cinema a means of expression, he has been able to 'adapt' literary works to the cinema. In fact, adaptation here is a misnomer. For Ray did not translate literary terms into film terms. He took a story, say of Tagore, as in the cases of *Charulata, Postmaster* and *Gharey Bairey*, and told that story in cinematic terms. He recreated the story in film, he did not translate the novel into cinema. That is why his are great 'adaptations.' To use the exression coined by a French critic writing about a film by Bresson, you have in a film adaptation by Satyajit Ray 'all that the novel gave you plus its refraction through the film medium.' But Ray created directly for the screen his own stories too: *Nayak, Kanchanjungha*, and *Agantuk*, for instance. As a young Bengali artist he had been moved by the novel *Pather Panchali*. He felt he could tell that story in film. But at that time, the only medium accessible to him was drawing, and hence he drew the story. As soon as he could, he told it in film. Later on, he felt he could tell his own stories in the same film medium. He had by then made the medium fully his own.

2

I had never seen any Indian film when in 1961 I saw the entire Apu trilogy in one evening. I was in New York on my way to India for the first time and the Apu story moved me profoundly. Later on, when I was able to read the original novel of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay from which the film was adapted, I was amazed to see how much of the book was in the film. No doubt, during my reading of the book the film constantly provided images which influenced my experience of the novel. Still, I found the same lovely characters, the same attention given to details in both the film and the book. Above all, the book aroused anew those poignant emotions which the film had created in me. More credit should have been given to Bibhutibhushan (Bandyopadhyay), I thought, for so many of the film's qualities. However, what I had discovered in the book I also found later on all over Bengal. In fact, the book and the film had conveyed to me something of India—at least of Bengal.

I soon realized, though, how widely different the film is from the book. The difference does not result only from the necessary adaptation of literary material to the film medium. Ray contemplated the same characters, lived the same emotions that were Bibhutibhushan's although he depicted these in a much more disciplined manner than the novelist has done. But in the process of making the trilogy, Ray transformed his material into something totally different from the book and as a result , Ray's film is not 'about the same thing' as the book.

For, what is the novel about? In the manner of Indian music, the novel is an attempt—largely successful—at recreating the impression one can have—especially when one is an Indian—of life as constant flux. *Pather Panchali*, the song of the road, is the song of life. The road here is that of life in its process. A visual representation of life in the novel is that of the river going, going and going — the image recurs as a leitmotif throughout the book. For Bibhutibhushan, man is taken by life in its flow, like chaff on the water, whether he wishes it or not. But, mysteriously enough, at the end of his journey man finds himself at his point of departure. He has not ceased to be carried away; yet, in the end, he has not really moved. The second book of the novel is titled *Aparajito*, the invincible. In Bibhutibhushan's mind, the invincible is not the character of the novel, but the mystery of life : permanence in change. The last lines of the novel express this clearly: 'The mystery of life, for ever invincible, again appears in all its splendour.' Bibhutibhushan explains that after nearly twenty years Apu comes back in his own son to his birthplace, the village of Nishchindipur. Just as Apu had grown up under the care of an old aunt so also Apu's son is entrusted to an old friend. As for Apu himself, he is made to go on a distant journey to be reabsorbed by nature, as it were, in the romance and luxury of Fiji. Thus the cycle of life is complete: from Nishchindipur to Nishchindipur, from boyhood to

boyhood. In nearly eight hundred pages Apu's life is depicted as an endless series of minor events, dreams and recollections.

The narration flows like the Ganga in the Bengal delta, divided into hundreds of rivulets. At times, the direction of the river seems to be lost, yet its movement towards the sea continues, mysterious, unimpeded, In the end, however, nothing actually changes. For all his peregrinations, Apu has not grown much wiser. He comes back to Nishchindipur with Kajal, as ignorant of the mystery of life as his 'abodh' son. Bibhutibhushan writes: 'The boy's father was slightly mistaken. For after an absence of forty years it was the same baffled boy Apu who came back to Nishchindipur.'

Bibhutibhushan's aim is to recreate this impression of a ceaseless flow. This determines his style in two main ways. Firstly, little importance is given to characterization in the novel. The protagonists live their tragedies, they experience human passions, but outside the framework of a personal drama. For the real and unique drama is that of life itself, mysteriously unfolding. The second stylistic characteristic is correlative to the first one: since there is no drama—no action in the sense of Aristotle's *Poetics* — the novel has no linear structure, no beginning, middle or end. Much of it could be suppressed. Much could be added to it. The cyclic structure of the novel taken as a whole (from boyhood to boyhood) is also found in its parts. For instance, the first book of the novel ends with Apu coming back to Nishchindipur. Furthermore, several small sections flash back, starting from a point of the story, going back in time and returning to the initial point just to start the same process over again.

Repetition is yet another manner in which Bibhutibhushan denegates change in movement itself. A striking example of this occurs after Apu's marriage with Aparna, a village girl. Apu returns to Calcutta alone but he comes back to his wife's village nearly every week. He does this again and again until it becomes inevitable that he should take her along with him to Calcutta. In this way the event is de-dramatized and the necessary change is almost imperceptible.

The importance of these notions is realized when comparing the novel with the film. Satyajit Ray's trilogy rightly bears the name of Apu for it shows Apu's growth through the three main stages of life: boyhood, adolescence and manhood. The entire trilogy has a beginning, a middle and an end. In turn each film has a linear structure. Whereas Bibhutibhushan's novel has the incantatory and repetitive form of most Indian music, Ray's films have a form usually associated with western music. Because the film is centred on one personage, Apu, the events of the boy's life are organized into a single drama. The *Pather Panchali* film which contains nearly two-thirds of the book of that name is more episodic and contains more characters than the next two films. *Aparajito*, which covers the end of the first book and the beginning of the second (*Aparajito*), describes Apu's relationship with his mother until after her death when he resolutely returns to Calcutta. And in *Apur Sansar* (the last section of the book

Aparajito), Apu accepts the responsibility of manhood. Significantly, each film ends with a departure, not a return to an initial point. In *Pather Panchali*, Apu's family leaves Nishchindipur, en route to Banaras: Apu leaves his boyhood forever. In *Aparajito* he leaves for Calcutta: adolescence is over. In *Apur Sansar* he again goes to Calcutta, this time a mature man. Thus, in the film, Apu grows out of the mysterious cycle where Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay had thought him trapped. Some critics have pointed out that with the coming of Kajal to Nishchindipur the cycle of life begins again. This is true but what counts at that moment is the final maturing of Apu himself. And Ray does not develop the idea of a cycle starting all over again. If there is a cycle in the trilogy, it is a matter of style, not a vision of life as a circle where nothing happens. On the contrary, the film shows an irreversible process: Apu's growth into manhood. By throwing away his autobiographical and narcissistic novel, Apu drops the shackles which prevented him from receiving his son. As the leaves of the novel go with the wind, Apu emerges from the womb of romance ready literally to shoulder his responsibility as Kajal's father.

Bibhutibhushan's *The Song of Life* and *The Invincible* (mystery of life) have become under Ray's treatment 'the song of the little road'. 'the unvanquished' (Apu) and 'the world of Apu'. The point at issue here is not the faithfulness of the film to the novel, a matter for purists to discuss. What is established in the foregoing analysis is the originality of Ray who has injected a new point of view in the very events narrated by Bibhutibhushan. That new point of view has called for a dramatization of the literary material. And because of that new point of view, Apu advances victorious at the end of the film instead of disappearing as he does at the end of the book. The main difference between the book and the film is that the former is a contemplation of life as an invincible mystery, while the latter is an apt depiction of the invincible growth of a man to freedom and love.

Life remains profoundly mysterious in Ray's three films. But its mystery is humanized and perceived in technology, like the train or the telegraph, or in events apparently senseless from a human point of view. Furthermore, the mystery is not numbing. It is attractive and challenging. Apu gradually opens up to life. In *Apur Sansar*, where the progressive awakening of Apu is more striking, Apu is seen several times rising from sleep. The news of his wife's death causes him to fall into a sort of torpor (total sleep in suicide is alluded to) from which he emerges only at the end of the film.

From book to film, time, the imaginary duration of the art work, has been submitted to a new organization. The book proceeds in the manner of a description which itself necessarily evolves in time but is concerned with a static object. The film's time on the other hand is the duration of an event, the growth of Apu. Of course, there are two durations in the film: that of the film itself (the time the spectator must sit in order to watch the entire film) and the time of the narration (the twenty-five years of Apu's life which the spectator must imagine in order to grasp the trilogy's significance). There are

two durations in the novel, too: the time a reader takes to read through eight hundred pages, and the duration of the situations depicted in those pages. But every effort was made by the novelist to compensate for the impression of duration. The cyclic form given to the novel creates the impression that time is an illusion. The novel is akin to those multiform Indian sculptures which suggest an Infinity of movement but participate in the static quality of the rock on which they are carved.

Organization of events in a temporal sequence, dramatic structure, character analysis, teleological narration—all this is typical of western art and explains why a film like *Apur Sansar* can arouse an enthusiastic response in a western spectator. The exotic quality of the film and the pleasure of discovering a foreign film so profoundly human have also contributed towards placing the Apu trilogy among the films which are most often shown by film societies abroad.

Is Ray's trilogy, then, a westernized Indian cinema? Not in the least.

For there is one thing which disturbs the foreign spectator : the pace of the trilogy. Not a few western spectators begin to appreciate the Apu films only at a second or even a third screening. They cannot at first adjust to what they call the 'slow' pace of the film. When one says that a film is too slow-paced, what does one mean if not that one found it more or less boring? But the perception of a pace as slow or fast is essentially relative. The pace of *Pather Panchali* is certainly not slow for its maker—especially if slow should mean boring—but correct, and not only correct, but probably the only correct pace the film could be given.

The question of pace relates to modes of perception. The pace of a masterpiece can train the spectator to perceive things as the film's maker does. When foreign spectators begin to enjoy the 'slow' pace of *Pather Panchali*, they begin to look at life the way Satyajit Ray does. To illustrate this point, I would like to mention the series of alternating close-ups at the beginning of the candy-man sequence in *Pather Panchali*. At that point of the film, Apu and Durga are preparing, unknown to their parents, a mixture of pickles which they enjoy with the added gratification of a forbidden pleasure. There are about ten alternating close-ups of Apu and Durga simply eating and smiling with joy. The close-ups are not only repetitive; they are kept, each one, for what would be in current film style a 'long' time. Yet once the spectator has adjusted to the 'slow' pace, he finds this series of images most interesting. For Ray knows the art of keeping the image in sight beyond the time required for it to convey its information and where it generates enjoyment. Before the enjoyment begins to recede Ray offers a new image. This is more than simply an art of looking; it is an art of living. I have always felt that the Indians know, more than the westerners, to experience life, to enjoy it. From this point of view, the category of time has little importance, and each object, each person, each event, because it is not drawn away by the inexorable onrush of time, becomes an infinite source of pleasure. The westerner experiences his own

existence mainly in this action, whereas, I believe, the Indian experiences existence and life in itself perhaps more than his own personal existence and life. This is reflected in the 'slow' paced trilogy of Ray. I should add, however, that the pace in the Ray films has changed considerably after the trilogy where it was partly determined by the subject matter.

The Apu trilogy is still more radically an Indian work of art in yet another way. Generally, the foreign spectator is familiar with the Indian view of life I have described as typical of Bibhutibhushan's, viz. life as a cycle, as the mystery of permanence in change. But there is a complementary Indian view with which the western spectator may be less familiar: the urge to penetrate the mystery, a dynamism strong enough to break open the cycle. In India, the stronger the cycle of life, and the more impenetrable the mystery, the greater were the men who have attempted to achieve freedom from the cycle and an insight into the mystery. Only a civilization powerful enough to break the fetters of the cycle can realize how strong that cycle can be. That is what Indian civilization has depicted so emphatically. At the same time that civilization has produced giants like Buddha, and closer to us, Tagore or Nehru. While sensing life as an impenetrable mystery these men have achieved a realization of its meaning. Does not the invincible Apu at the end of *Apur Sansar* emerge as a victorious Siddhartha or Buddha? Bibhutibhushan leaves him 'abodh' at the end of the novel. Ray, on the contrary, makes of him a modern 'bodhisattva'. Starting from a typically Indian novel, Ray has constructed a film trilogy which may be more easily accessible to the foreign spectator but is no less typically Indian than its literary counterpart.

3

Ray borrows most of his film ideas from existing novels, but when it comes to transferring these into films he is left to himself. This isolation is a consequence of his being what the French have called an *auteur*, that is, a filmmaker who is alone responsible for his films. A film *auteur* creates private imaginary worlds absolutely needed for the collective life of the society. Ours being a cinema of scarcity, we have too few *auteurs* and this means again too few opportunities for Ray to exchange at his own level. An *auteur* needs to be in constant dialogue with the widest possible range of people, otherwise he runs the risk of losing touch with the ever-changing sensibility of his milieu. This is not happening to Ray, fortunately: few persons are as well informed and as sensitive to contemporary life as Ray is.

However, over the years a certain radicalization has taken place among film audiences and filmmakers in India as elsewhere in the world. At home Ray's audience is increasingly polarized. While some reject all Ray films, others praise them all, in either case not always for very profound reasons. At the basis of this polarization is a shift in sensibility which is growing ever more accentuated and may well be irreversible. A dialogue should take place about this phenomenon among film people, artists, intellectuals

and persons concerned with cultural life. But there is no forum that I know of for such a dialogue.

It is in this context that I wish to ponder over some of the options which I feel may be open to Ray. I do not doubt that he has already considered them and has even made his choice. First, however, I must discuss the question of sensibility to films.

An excellent example of difference in sensibility was provided by Ray himself when in the course of an interview he gave me in 1970 he explained his attitude towards some of Tagore's writings:

> Certain stories of Tagore are quite Victorian in their feeling. Take the *Postmaster*: At the end of the original story, the postmaster is supposed to leave and the little servant girl falls at his feet and says, 'Please, don't leave me alone, please take me with you.' This struck me as being sentimental. I could not express that because it was an emotion I don't feel, being a man of the twentieth century, being brought up in certain surroundings, being exposed to certain influences. So I made the ending of the story more dry, yet moving in its own way. I made it into the opposite of what it was. The girl in the film hides her grief instead of displaying it. She ignores the postmaster. She is so hurt that she does not ever want to tell this man that she is unhappy. You see her weeping by the well from which she is drawing water. But the moment he calls her she wipes her tears. She walks past him carrying the bucket of water and ignores the tip that he was about to offer her. That was my interpretation as a twentieth century artist working in 1960. The purists object to these changes. Well, I made them because I also am an artist with my own feelings. I was using Tagore's rendering of a story as a basis and this was my interpretation of it.

Some persons who otherwise have a great admiration for Ray may feel differently than he does in respect of some of his films. For example, some years ago I attended a private show of *Charulata* held especially for Louis Marcorelles, the official film critic of the prestigious *Le Monde* of Paris. I then believed and still believe *Charulata* to be the best of all Ray films made up to 1964, the year of *Charulata's* production. From the point of view of film language *Charulata* is well in advance on the Apu trilogy. Surely, Marcorelles who has occasionally contributed articles to the *Cahiers du Cinéma* and thus belonged to a group of sophisticated film critics could not fail to notice Ray's brilliant direction and Subrata Mitra's extraordinary camera work. Yet, he positively disliked the film. Not that he found it a 'bad' film. But, as I understood later on, Marcorelles was then fascinated by a totally different type of cinema, the so-called 'cinema direct', and so deep a change in his sensibility had taken place that he could not find *Charulata* an interesting film.

This sort of difference in sensibility was illustrated recently by Tarkovsky. In his film *Andrei Rublev* Tarkovsky had two contemporary imagemakers dialogue on their art : Theophanes the Greek and Andrei

Rublev. The iconographers of old were the precursors of modern filmmakers and, of course, through their dialogue Tarkovsky discussed his own social function as a filmmaker. Theophanes argued that there was so much evil in the world, causing people to experience so much suffering, that he felt impelled to paint icons of the last judgement to remind people of the impending wrath of God that would make them mend their ways, he hoped. Rublev, on the other hand, said that he also witnessed his people's suffering, but he could not paint the image of the last judgement any more; he could only paint a figure of Christ, the 'Compassionate Lord'. He felt that people did not need to be reminded of their sins and of the terrible judgement of God. What they needed was to experience the compassion of the Saviour and regain faith in life and in themselves. Rublev loved Theophanes who was senior to him and was then at the peak of his career. Yet, however pained he was at this necessary parting of the ways, he had to paint in a different manner than Theophanes did. In retrospect, it is possible to argue that both the types of images, those of Theophanes and those of Andrei, had their role to play in the life of the iconographers' society. One type of picture was not exclusive of the other, and it was best that the imagemakers be true, each one to his spontaneous response to contemporary life. Had they not been so, the collective life of their people would have been impoverished.

I can well imagine, in some distant future, an Indian Tarkovsky making a film on image-maker Satyajit Ray and staging a dialogue between Ray and another imagemaker—a veteran like Ritwik Ghatak or Mrinal Sen, or a younger cineaste like Shyam Benegal, Kaul or Sahani. (Historical situations never quite duplicate themselves. Hence I'd rather not be too specific as to the counterparts chosen for the dialogue . . . Ray would in all truth say that he sees his people's sufferings and that he feels impelled to describe them all. Is there any other Indian filmmaker who has dealt with as many aspects of Indian life—social, cultural, political, economic—as Ray did? According to his sensibility Ray makes true-to-life images which he offers to the onlookers for them to reflect on and to react to if they so want. Evidently, this is not the only type of image one can create starting from the same life situations. Another filmmaker will shout his distress, yet another will teach some way out. Correspondingly, a particular onlooker will resent as a lack of commitment the reserve with which Ray depicts unbearable situations. Yet another will hold that the time to 'do something about it' has long come and he will question the usefulness of making 'statements' about sordid aspects of our lives. Good. But to declare that this or that approach is wrong and another one right would be sheer dogmatism. I am afraid I have to say that such dogmatism is rampant in film milieux.

It may be appropriate to describe the change in attitude which I myself underwent with regard to the Ray films. I have already described my first experience of and response to the Apu Trilogy, when I was fortunate to see the entire trilogy in one sitting in New York, of all places. That was in 1961,

the night before I was to leave for India for the first time. Of course, I was in a very particular state of mind. But I must say to those who fear that *Pather Panchali*, if shown abroad, may give a 'wrong' image of India that this was not the case with me. The Apu trilogy revealed to me an extraordinary people whom I longed to meet with great respect and humility. For, as a young missionary, if I at all shared the arrogance and paternalism so common among Westerners, nothing could have helped me more than the experience of watching the Apu films, to realize that there were lots of things I would have to learn from the Indian people before I could dream of being of help to anyone of them.

There was yet another aspect to the experience. If the Apu trilogy introduced India to me it also showed me what cinema can be, That was, in fact, my third 'discovery' of the cinema, the first having been while watching Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* when I was 16, and the second while watching Robert Bresson's *Un condamné à mort s'est echappé*. And then came the Apu films. I was absolutely swept away. Never before had I seen or noticed such cinematography as that of Subrata Mitra. But it was only after some time when, having learnt Bengali, I could read Bibhutibhushan's two novels from which the film trilogy was made, that I understood how deeply revolutionary Ray's Apu films were. I do not think that people abroad perceive this aspect of the trilogy, and I am not so sure that most Indians are conscious of it. As for myself, a comparison between Bibhutibhushan's book and Ray's film made me see that the writer's world is a changeless, timeless, repetitive world whose symbol is the ever flowing river on which specks of hay drift aimlessly, one after the other . . . Kajal after Apu. Ray's world on the contrary, is dynamic, time-bound. Its symbol is the train. In Ray's world irreversible changes take place. From childhood to manhood Apu reaches to enlightenment. Kajal's life will be different from that of his father.

Thus, the importance of the Apu trilogy in 1955 did not derive solely from its aesthetic excellence. The Apu films broke away from a certain ideology and put forward another one, no less Indian—that of the struggling individuals, who believe changes are possible and have a will to bring them about. In fact the very aesthetic excellence of the Apu films results from the ideology which Ray has injected into the material provided by the book which is used in his own words as an encyclopaedia of ruralia. Ray's Apu is individualistic and has no social concerns, it is true. He nonetheless is a struggling individual who attains personal freedom and becomes capable of literally shouldering (Kajal on his shoulders) his social responsibility. A parallel may be drawn here between the endings of a neorealist film *Bicycle Thieves* and Ray's *Apur Sansar*. While in De Sica's film the son of the poor vanquished man is brought down to becoming a partner in his father's ineluctible defeat and degradation, in Ray's film the son is elevated and introduced by the father into a life of self-respect, joy and liberty.

I mentioned earlier that to me the most cinematic of all Ray films from the Trilogy to *Charulata*

(1964) was *Charulata*. Later on when *Aranyer Din-Ratri* appeared in 1969 I felt that this film was the best Ray film thus far, better still than *Charulata*. I liked *Pratidwandi* (1970) of course, but I believed *Aranyer Din-Ratri* to be better cinema. Later on, however, the Ray films appeared to me less interesting. I liked *Sonar Kella* (1974) but disliked *Ashani Sanket* (1973). Since it was the same Ray and since *Ashani Sanket* was definitely a 'good' film, what was happening to me? Paradoxically I liked *Sonar Kella* for its apparent irrelevance and I disliked *Ashani Sanket* for its obvious relevance. I had reached a point when a 'statement', however true and courageous, about as relevant a fact as the West Bengal famine was to me irrelevant and even irritating. To my sensibility, a much more questioning approach was required, appealing more to the mind than to the heart. The film, I felt, should have thrown at least some light on the social mechanisms which brought about the famine. In my opinion the very relevance of the film called for a much less contemplative approach. On the other hand, I thought that *Sonar Kella*, which did not seek to be topical, was relevant to the need for clean, intelligent entertainment. I would not wish all films to deal in depth with social issues. I think there is real need for entertainment films like *Sonar Kella*.

The reason why I became less interested in the Ray films of the 1970s was that at the time I had become increasingly interested in 'cinéma direct' — somewhat like Marcorelles — and when I decided to make a television documentary film in 1970, it was in the direct cinema style that I spontaneously chose to make it. Naturally, I greatly appreciated *The Inner Eye* (1973). But it was not only its direct cinema touches which I liked. What I appreciated most in it was the ability of Satyajit Ray to put his own medium at the service of another art. At last I saw a film on painting which did not destroy the paintings in order to recreate them into a film. I felt that only a great artist could thus bring somebody else's art to the fore without, if I may say, 'stealing the show.' Unfortunately, I have not yet seen *Balasaraswati* (1976) or rather I missed it once. For the film was shown when Ray's book, *Our Films, Their Films*, was launched by Orient Longman. I was invited to the function and I readily joined. But I was so annoyed with Orient Longman for making their invited guests pay the full Rs 60 for pre-autographed copies of the book that being anxious to read it, I paid, took my book and walked out. I wish I'd stayed of course. I have not seen the Sikkim film either. But on the basis of seeing *Tagore* and *The Inner Eye* I believe Ray to be a first class documentary filmmaker in addition to being a master feature filmmaker, which means he has a total control over the film medium in most of its applications.

I should like to emphasize that a shift of sensibility in favour of a certain type of films does not make of these films absolute models. All film is fiction, and all fiction is moulded on a particular ideology. Hence the 'cinéma direct' of the Brault, Rouch, or Leacock types is not the last word in filmmaking. Nor do cinéma direct films invalidate other types of films. The pitfall of many critics who search for

radicalism is to dogmatically erect a particular approach to film as the ultimate and only valid one. Marcorelles, for instance, did just that in his book *Living Cinema*.

If, beyond any matters of sensibility, one wishes to militate for a certain type of cinema at the exclusion of other types one has to question filmmaking at a much deeper level. One has to raise the issues of the modes of pictorial representation and the modes of narration as ideologically determined and thus as either progressive or reactionary. Moreover, the debate has to be set in a much wider context than that of filmmaking because it involves all the 'media' of a society, its particular structures, its modes of material and spiritual productions etc. While this debate is desirable it is also difficult to sustain. And the militant, often aggressive, attitude of those who engage in it causes them to discuss issues with more assertive force than rational arguments.

Unless one is satisfied with shouting slogans to reassure oneself in the night of one's solitude, one has to take stock of the particular moment of history one lives in. For instance, to want all cinema to do away with story telling overnight is to live in no history at all — past, present of future, Secondly, while it may be quite reasonable to disagree on ideological grounds with a particular type of filmmaking, one has to acknowledge that perhaps in a particular circumstance another type of filmmaking is not possible. How to expect the film establishment to pay for the making and distributing of films which directly challenge its existence? I do not wish to say that differences in sensibility are purely formal and of no ideological importance. What I mean is that these differences are perhaps the only ones which can be accommodated within a particular set-up. However, the fostering of certain sensibilities positively prepares for radical changes in social structures, while other forms of sensibility tend to make existing structures more acceptable. Beyond this, filmmaking offers little scope for revolutionary activity. It is only by encouraging suitable shifts in sensibility that films can prepare for social changes. To ask more than this from films in our present socio-economic situation may be brave, but is sadly unrealistic.

4

If it were possible to bring together all the film characters that Satyajit Ray created during his career as a filmmaker, surely some two hundred of them would turn up, including people of all possible ages—men and women—from babies to very old persons. Babies like Apu and later in the Apu trilogy, Apu's own son, Kajal. But also the baby yet to be born that Charulata dreams of. Old people like auntie Indir in *Pather Panchali* or the grandfather in *Shakha-Prashakha*. Between these extremes you have a good number of elderly men like Biswambhar in *Jalsaghar*, Kalikinkar Roy in *Devi*, Indranath Chaudhuri in *Kanchanjungha*. The majority of characters, though, would consist of young adults. But there would also be some marvellous youths. Like, of course, Apu in *Aparajito* and *Apur Sansar*. But

perhaps Apu is too well known for me to discuss him here. Besides, he ends up being a young adult. I would like rather to discuss four other young characters who remain young until the end of the film in which they appear but who nonetheless undergo an irreversible process of growth. Youth is a period of transition. A youth is no more a child and not yet a young adult. The first two Ray characters I wish to evoke now are those of Siddhartha in *Pratidwandi* and Mrinmoyee in *Samapti*. The depiction of their growth constitutes some of the finest fragments of cinema not only in Ray's entire work but in international cinema as well. Ray is at his best when he depicts the evolution of a character. The two other youths I want to introduce form a couple soon to get married in *Ganashatru*, viz. Indrani or Ranu, Dr Gupta's daughter, and her fiancé, Ranen.

In the depiction of these characters can be seen the love of Ray for the youth. And in their positive growth can be seen Ray's faith in the youth. Young people, he seems to say, deserve to be loved and one can put faith in them : they will come up to their responsibilities. This is true especially with regard to Siddhartha and to Mrinmoyee. When it comes to Indrani and her friend, the roles are reversed : it is they who help the adult hero to grow, and, of course, they too grow in the process of helping Dr Gupta. And in this too is seen the limitless faith of Ray in the youth.

In the film *Pratidwandi*, Siddhartha is a young man of 25, almost an adult but not quite so. Like in the case of many urban youths, his adulthood is delayed by his college and university studies. But the death of his father suddenly puts an end to his student's life. He must now find a job. Siddhartha's youthfulness is revealed by the manner in which he answers the questions put to him by his interviewers. He is not one to give the answers that are expected of him. True to himself he will say only what he thinks must be said. He does it, and, of course, he does not get the job. Later in the film he acknowledges that he has to be more careful.

Siddhartha must not only find a job, but he must find himself. Both the tasks are difficult. In the case of the job, it's obvious. There are very few jobs available, and to get one of them it is often necessary to compromise. The matter of Siddhartha's identity is infinitely complex. He defines himself in relation to his younger brother Tunu and his younger sister Sutapa. Tunu, like Siddhartha himself a few years earlier, is committed to political and violent action. But Siddhartha is a dreamer. As Tunu tells him at one point, 'there are two sorts of people : those who think and those who act. You think, I act.' Sutapa has a job and, with great pragmatism, she does whatever is required of her to advance her career. Siddhartha is not an activist and he is honest. He can follow the ways of neither his activist brother nor of his dishonest sister. As he goes in vain from one interview to the next, he meets Naresh-da, an old acquaintance of his political days. Naresh-da, with obvious sympathy for Siddhartha, tries to help him with a piece of advice, 'If you do not want to engage in political action, then you have to take

up a job of sorts. It's a life requirement.' Siddhartha has had enough of being lectured to. Yet, he respects Naresh-da. He does not quite refuse the offer of help from his elder, but shows no enthusiasm in taking up a job outside of Calcutta. It is significant that in the film it is Ray's voice that has spoken these words of advice to Siddhartha. It is said that Ray had to lend his voice because at the last moment the person who had been selected for the role did not sound correct. Yet, in lending his voice to Naresh-da Ray has identified more directly with the advice given to Siddhartha. Besides, the face of Naresh-da is never seen. Satyajit himself could have sat in front of Siddhartha. The words of Naresh-da in Satyajit's mouth are words of reason. And it is reason that will help Siddhartha grow. Not just dreams and feelings, however lofty.

The change in Siddhartha, his growth from a youth into a young adult, occurs after his aborted interview, the second in the film, when outraged by the decision of the interviewers to break for lunch, he enters their room, overthrows their table and walks out. The change that follows must have taken place over a period of at least a few days. That is, from the time he leaves the place of interview to the moment he finishes writing a letter to Keya, his girl friend. But the filmmaker takes only a few moments to show the change in his film. Besides, how do you show a change of mind? Here Ray uses the resources of the film medium superbly. As Siddhartha leaves the interviewers and walks out, there is a rapid lateral movement of the camera on wall posters, suggesting the intensity of Siddhartha's reaction. Then, this is immediately followed by a lateral movement of the camera showing fields from within a train. But this second movement is gentler and it shows an open space. The quality of the movement is different. There follow a few shots of Siddhartha, sitting in the moving train, entering a hotel, sitting in his room, giving an instruction to the bearer, hearing the sound of a bird, walking out on the verandah to listen to the bird. Meanwhile on the sound track from the shot when Siddhartha is seen in the train is heard his voice saying the words of the letter he is writing to Keya. In these few shots, the profound change in Siddhartha is revealed : a love is born, a responsibility (the job) is taken, and then, then only, can the bird be heard. The bird symbolizes Siddhartha's childhood. His innocence, his wholeness and harmony with nature. During the past few years he could not hear it. He didn't even know the name of the bird, nor could be imitate its song. He just remembered having heard it. Thus by accepting his responsibility, Siddhartha opened himself to love and regained the innocence of his childhood.

Of course, there is much to discuss about Siddhartha. Is he not a typical middle class intellectual? Is he not a bourgeois? Especially in the context of the political life of the early 1970s is he not utterly a-political? Whatever the answers to these questions, Siddhartha of *Pratidwandi* represents a type of youth the like of whom could be found in Calcutta at the time of the film. After a gap of over twenty

years, chances are that there are even today Siddharthas among us. Tunu and other similarly committed youths — like Amulya in *Gharey-Bairey*—are described with evident sympathy, but they do not represent Ray's own option. Siddhartha is closer to Ray. And Ray believes that finally the Siddharthas can grow into mature human persons, loving and responsible. Ray does not propose Siddhartha as a model to be imitated by other youths. He just expresses his faith in those Siddharthas of West Bengal.

Mrinmoyee has little in common with Siddhartha, except that like him she grows into a young adult. She is illiterate. She is a tomboy. But she is lovely. As Amulya returns home after completing his studies, a degree-holder and perfectly urbanized gentleman, he cannot help falling in love with her. Accordingly, he rejects the marriage planned by his mother. He has it his way. The marriage with Mrinmoyee takes place. But on the night of the marriage, the bride is not with her new husband. She spends the night out, looking after her pet squirrel, Chorky. When on the order of her mother-in-law, Mrinmoyee is locked up in the nuptial room, she throws a tantrum, and scatters pieces of furniture in the room, including Amulya's books. Amulya has to intervene, he orders her very gently, yet firmly, to collect the scattered books. 'Did you have to pick on my books?' he asks. As the girl comes to her senses he tells her not to worry, that he is leaving for Calcutta, and that she will be sent to her mother's house. Whenever she needs him, she can write to him, he will come.

After Amulya's departure, a profound change begins to take place in Mrinmoyee. But, again, how do you show a change of mind and especially, a change of heart? Ray does it in three shots. They are a marvellous moment of true cinema. One. Mrinmoyee is seen, almost in close-up, lying on her bed. Her younger brother, long time companion of her childish pranks, offers her a fruit — probably stolen— but she refuses, it, she is not interested. Two. The previous shot dissolves into an almost identical one. But the tone is darker. Time has passed by. Mrinmoyee's mother pleads with her to make her eat, but to no avail. Three. Another dissolve. This time the shot is bright. Mrinmoyee is still lying on her bed. She is smiling, her thumb close to her lips. Her small brother announces that squirrel Chorky is dead. He holds the dead animal by the tail in front of her face. She tells him to cremate it by the riverside. He asks whether she will come. Without any hesitation, she answers, 'no.' The transformation has taken place. The next moment she is seen writing a letter. The rest of the film will bring this transformation to its logical conclusion.

It should be noted that from the start Mrinmoyee is madly in love with Amulya. But she is yet a child. The sexual reverberation of her love is suggested by scenes like the stealing of Amulya's shoes, the placing of her bridal ornaments in the horn of Amulya's record player on the nuptial night when she runs away as if to say that she belongs to him, but needs some time. At another point in the film, seeing a barber cutting the hair of a client, she gets the idea of cutting a bunch of her own hair in

a gesture of self-mutilation which suggests her refusal to become a woman.

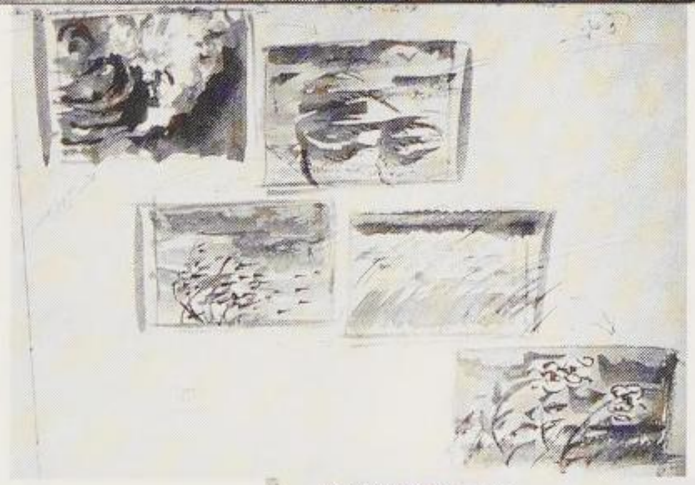
As in the case of Siddhartha, it is possible to question the very character of Mrinmoyee growing to womanhood. Although Ray has contributed some of the finest images of women on the screen, he was no feminist. It could be argued that the growth of Mrinmoyee is finally an acceptance of male domination over her. She grows a woman within the context of her own society. In the context of his film Ray was concerned with showing her evolution from childhood to early womanhood. What she is shown to grow into is an adult relationship with an adult man.

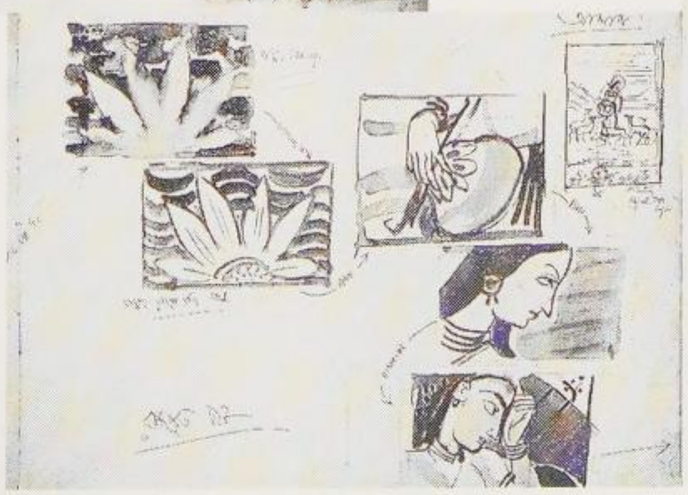
The presence of death in the two films, *Pratidwandi* and *Samapti*, may perhaps come as a surprise in films dealing with youths. The story of Siddhartha is neatly bracketed by death. The film opens with the funeral rites of Siddhartha's father. The film ends with the sound of a funeral procession for an unknown person. In order to understand the significance of death here, it helps to consider the attitude of Ray towards death in his films. In the Apu trilogy, for instance, at least five of the people closest to Apu die. But death does not dominate life. Rather, it is part of the life process. Life endures. And Siddhartha outgrows the shock caused by his father's death, and hence he can face life, with serenity, accepting the fact that death is part of life. The death of the squirrel Chorky is symbolic of Mrinmoyee's own death to her childhood and her being born a woman. One cannot cling to childhood. One must let go. On the night of her marriage, Mrinmoyee was still attached to her own childhood represented by Chorky. Only when she grew detached from the pet animal was she available for love of her husband. Similarly, as was noted earlier, when Siddhartha accepted his responsibility by taking up a job, he heard the song of the lost bird.

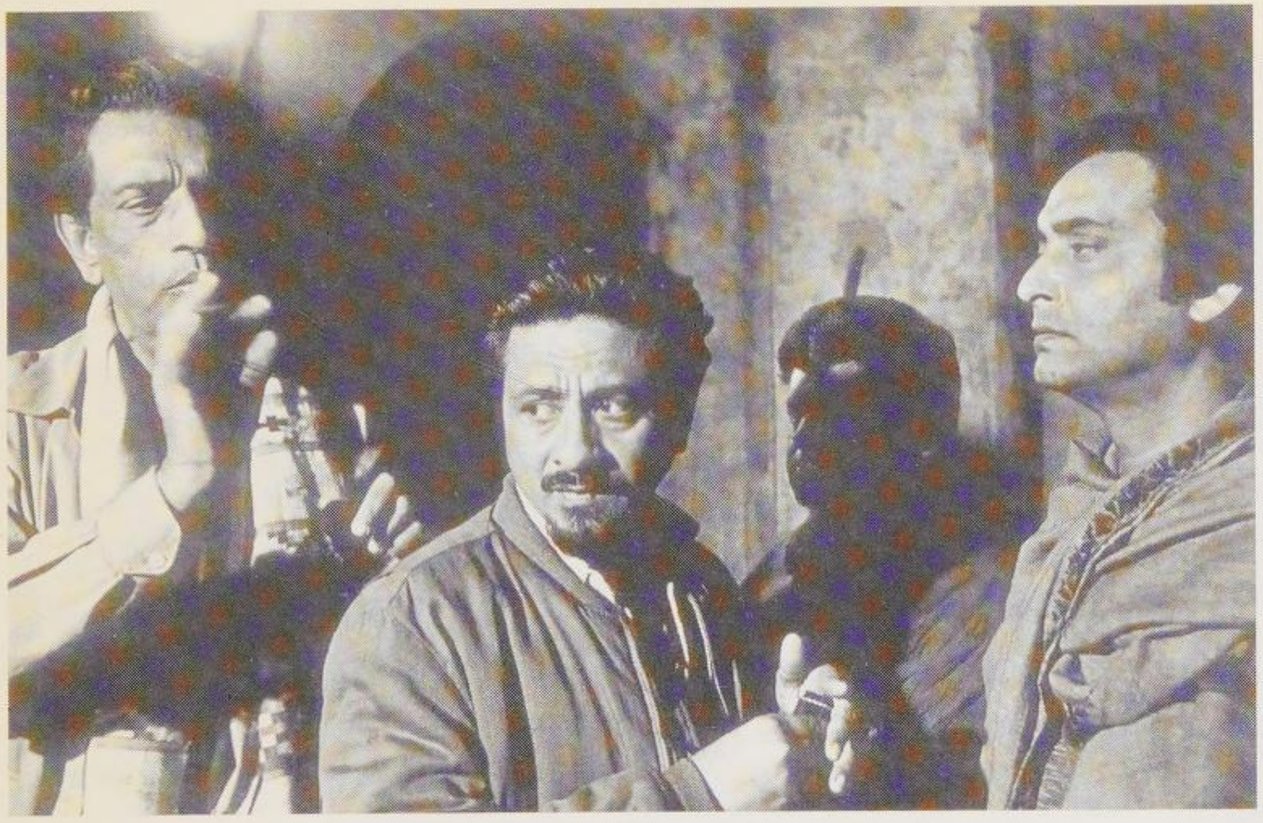
Ganashatru is perhaps the film which was most misunderstood in Calcutta. Largely because of a comparison between the film and Ibsen's play. The Calcutta public is too much of an expert in theatre to receive a film made 'after' a play by Ibsen without comparing film and play. There may have been a certain malaise too : the film is one of the most topical of Ray's. Topical, even political. In the words of a French critic,

> *Ganashatru* is a very political film, a view, at once most profound and just, on what concerns the end of our century : the return of religious fanaticism (religious feeling as belonging to the people and as such being sacred, untouchable), its links with politics (power, institutions, and the control of the masses), the economics (its touristic exploitation) and the media (rumour and heretical defamation).
>
> (Charles Tesson in *Cahiers du cinéma*. no 422, July/Aug. 1989, p. 22.)

From Vilambit to Drut, from slow to fast : sketches for a film project on Ravi Shankar, never realized.







TOP LEFT. *Joi Baba Felunath* : Ray rehearses with Soumitra Chatterjee, Soumendu Roy. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

TOP RIGHT. *Apur Sansar* : Ravi Shankar composes, with Ray listening. Courtesy : Ray family.

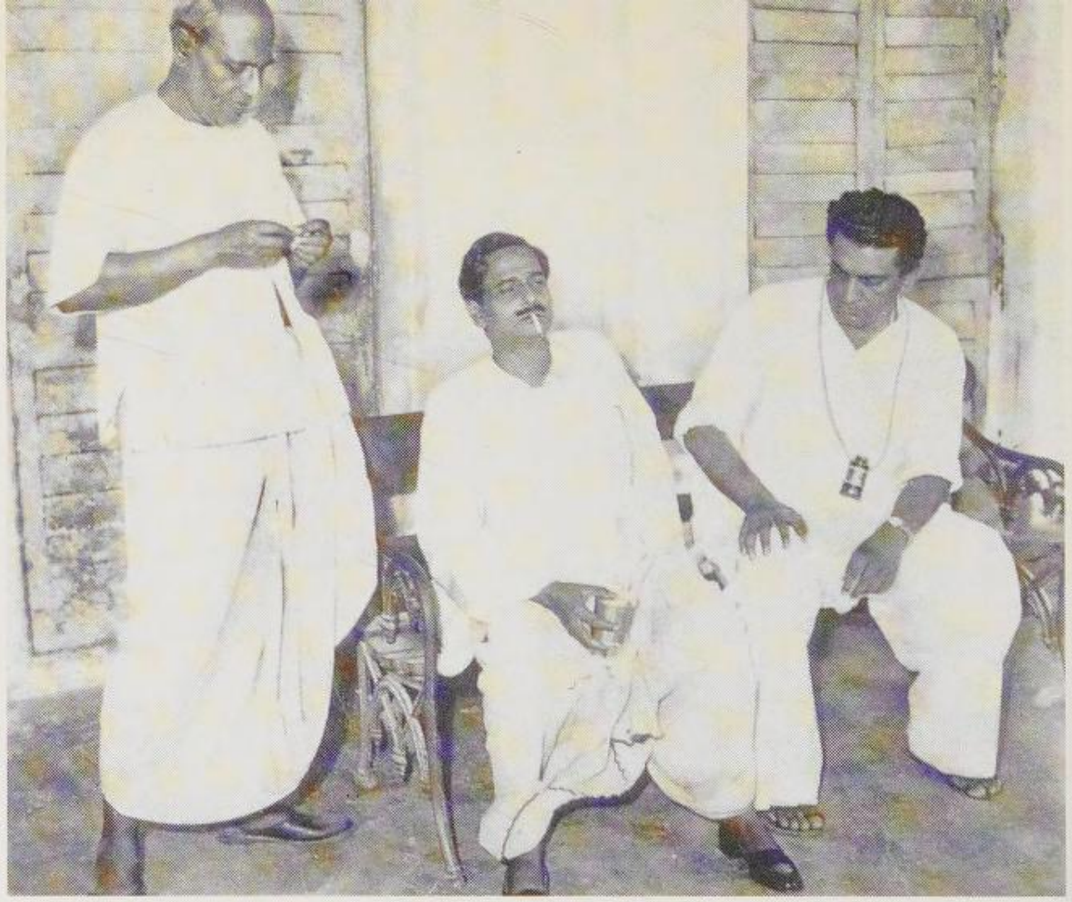
Aranyer Dinratri : Ray with others at a music rehearsal. Photograph : Subrato Patranobis.

Rabindranath : Ray listens to the music with Kanak Biswas and some close relations. Courtesy : Ray family.

Charulata : Ray listens to Kishore Kumar rehearsing a song. Courtesy : Ray family.

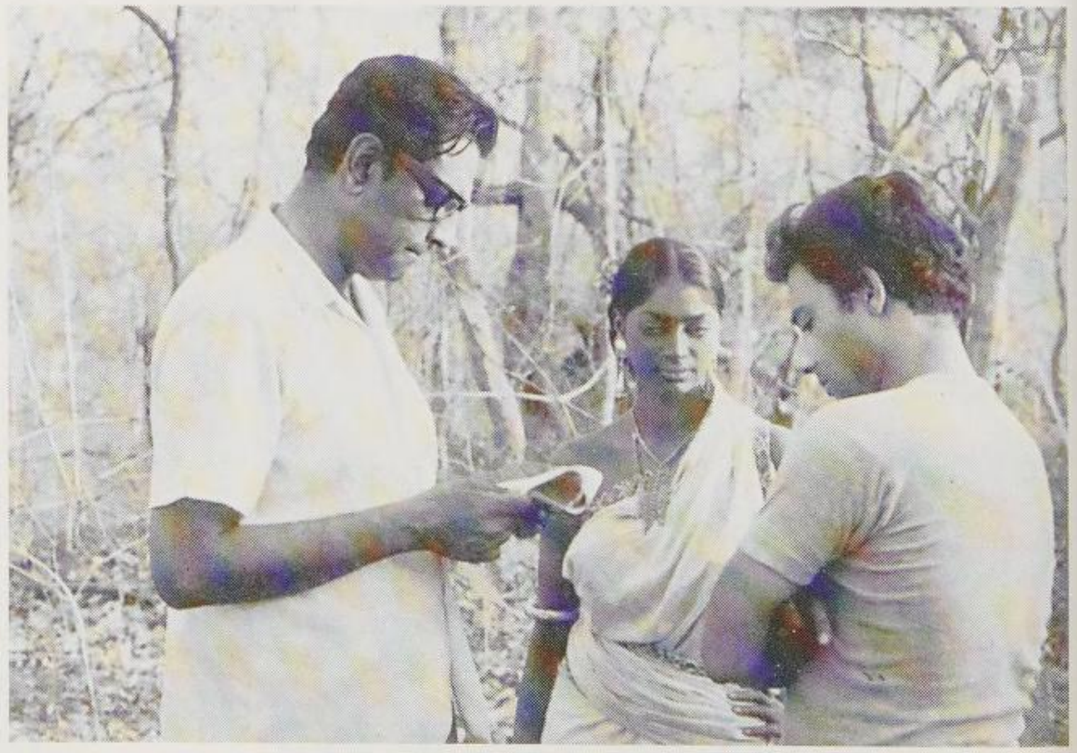
Hirak Rajar Deshey : Ray conducting the music. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

Post Master : Ray with cast and crew. Courtesy : Ray family.



Jalsaghar : Ray directs Gangapada Basu as Mahim with Tulsi Lahiri as Taraprasanna at left. Courtesy : Ray family.

Goopy Gyne : Ray directs Robi Ghosh as Bagha and Tapen Chatterjee as Goopy. Courtesy : Ray family.



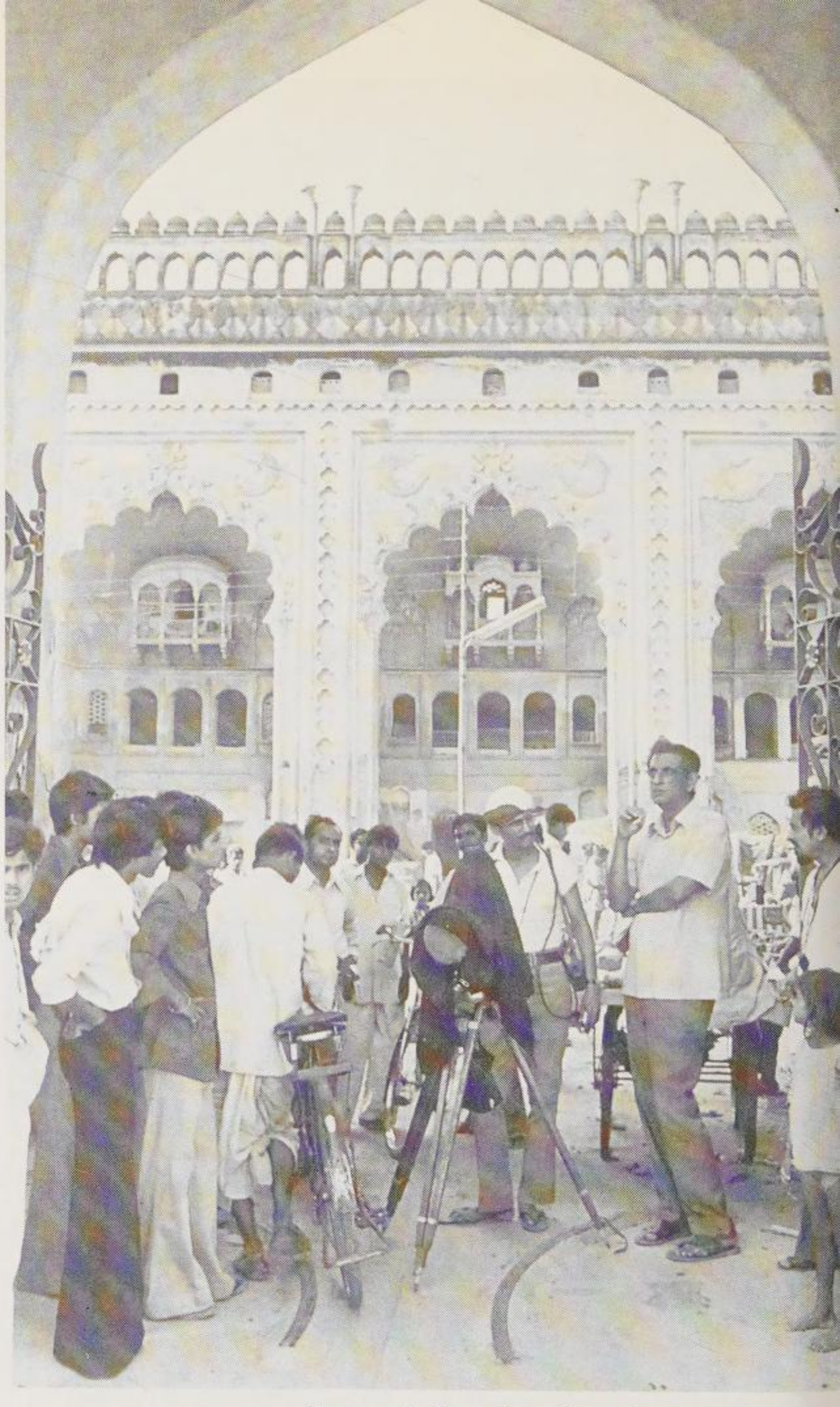
Aranyer Din Ratri : Ray rehearses with Samit Bhanja as Harinath and Simi as Duli. Courtesy : Ray family.

Shatranj ke Khiladi : Ray discusses a sequence with Birju Maharaj, chroreographer and dancer. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

Hirak Rajar Deshey : Ray rehearses with Santosh Dutta as Gabeshak. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

Sadgati : Ray discusses a point with Smita Patil as Jhuria. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

Shatranj : Ray briefs Richard Attenborough as General Outram. Photograph : Sandip Ray.



Shatranj : Ray plans for a shot in Lucknow. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

Bala : Ray in conversation with Bala and her daughter. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh.

tranj : Amjad Khan as Wajid Ali and Victor Banerjee as Ali Naqi Khan
h Ray directing his technicians. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

hakha-Prashakha : Ray directs a shot : Bijaya Ray and Mamata Shankar are
een behind. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh.

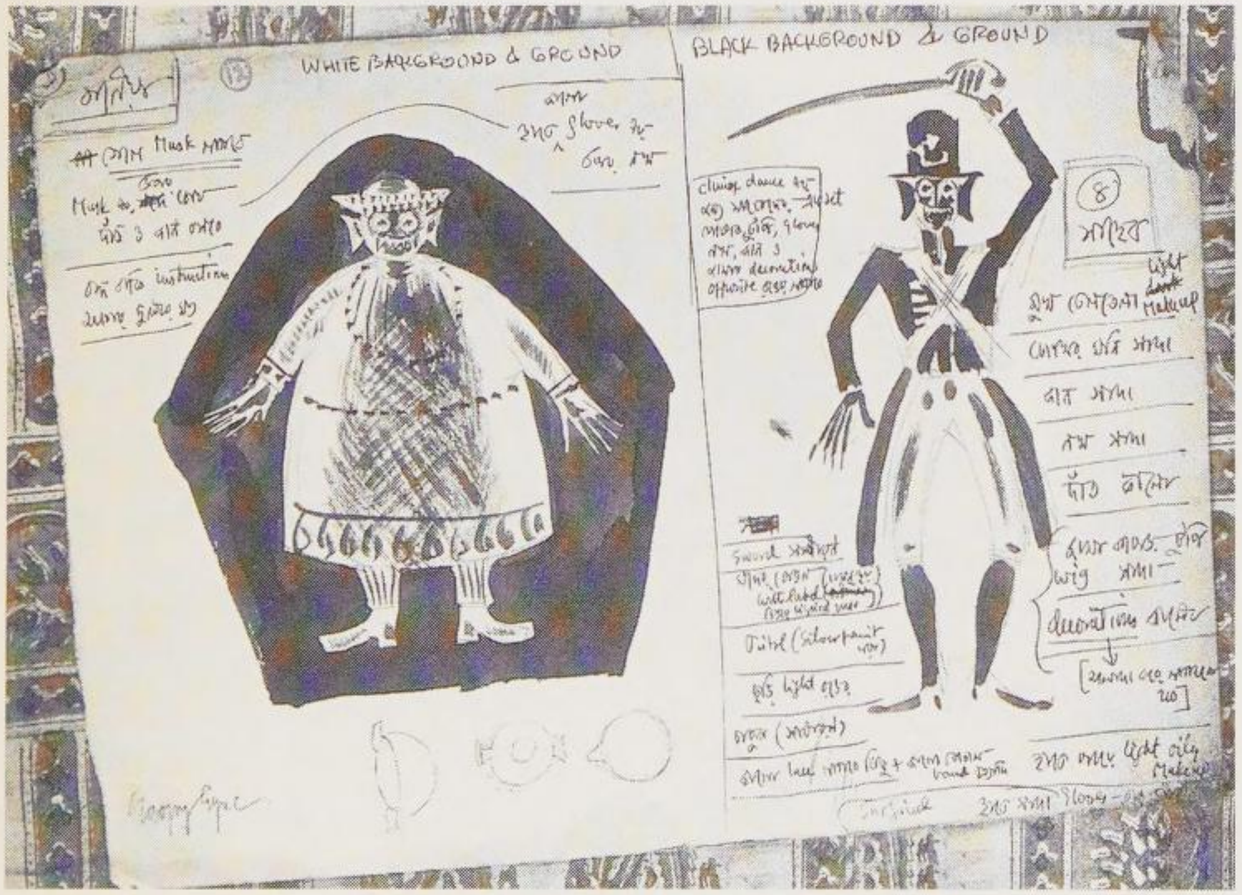
Ganashatru : Ray with son Sandip and Hiten Ghosh during rerecording. Photograph : Hirak Sen.

Jana Aranya : Ray directs an outdoor shot. Photograph : Sandip Ray.

Ganashatru : Ray looks for a location in his dear town Calcutta. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh.

Sketches for *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne*.

RIGHT. The dancing ghosts, with suggestions for the music.
BELOW LEFT. Details for particular ghosts.
BELOW RIGHT. The Good King and the Bad King, both played by the same actor.



And, of course, the temple. Hinduism. The *charanamrita*. Enough to make you look the other way. That is, the safe way, Ibsen. There is no scope here for an exhaustive reading of this marvellous film. Besides for the moment my subject is well defined : Satyajit and his faith in the youth. Ray's love and admiration for the youth is evident in his depiction of Siddhartha and Mrinmoyee. In *Ganashatru* he goes much farther. Towards the end of the film, Dr Gupta has come to believe that everything is over, he will not be able to speak out the truth. At that moment, when he sinks into despair, his daughter and his future son-in-law bring him the assurance that all is not lost. He asks them, 'Then, there is still hope?' They answer, 'Yes, of course.' Dr Gupta, who has been deluded by his own brother, the publisher and the editor of the local newspaper, immediately believes in these youths. What he will do later on with their help is of little importance. Thanks to the youths, he will again continue to speak. Indrani and her fiancé will themselves see to it that Dr Gupta's article is published. At that very moment, a group of youths, Ranen's theatre group and other friends, are outside the house shouting slogans which can be heard in the living room of Dr Gupta, like an echo of the words uttered by the young couple inside. Thus, the home and the world are linked in a masterly manner. In *Gharey-Bairey*, Nikhil and Bimala expressed their politics in their private love, so also in this film the intrafamilial relationships extend outside of the family in the world of politics. About this Charles Tesson has commented :

> The collusion of politics and aesthetics in one and the same voice [the slogans of the friends outside. GR] is almost a miracle, and it is beautiful that a person whose life is dedicated to art, to representation, finally fills the field of politics. (op. cit. p. 24)

In an interview with Andrew Robinson, Satyajit Ray had said that if he had to stop making films, he might consider writing his autobiography (Robinson, Andrew : *Satyajit Ray, The Inner Eye.* London : Andre Deutsch Ltd. 1989. p. 346). Ray did make three films after that interview, but it is difficult not to read elements of an autobiography in these films. In this case, it is as if Ray had created an occasion for two youths (indirectly his own son) to declare themselves, to speak out, 'Yes, you may have faith in us.'

Ray's faith in the youth was part of his faith in man. While making his film, *Rabindranath Tagore,* in 1961, Ray had quoted a passage from *Crisis in Civilization* where Tagore expresses his disappointment regarding the West. But Tagore had added : 'And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in man.' In his own way, Ray has expressed his own disenchantment with contemporary civilization, but he too, like Tagore, has expressed his faith in man in his last film, *Agantuk.*

After having indicated the thematic development of Ray's faith in youth and in man, I would like to revert to the film *Ganashatru* and discuss its ending from an aesthetic point of view. Those critics

who found that the ending of the film was abrupt probably considered mainly its thematic development or its dramatic structure. In this they were off the mark. The main formative element of the film is neither thematic nor dramatic. It is musical. If you forget the story and its development, you will find that the film evolves like music, with the freedom from theme and meaning that music has in order to constitute a pure emotional pattern. *

One may notice that in several instances during the film *Ganashatru*, Dr Gupta holds the hand of his wife or of his daughter. The same is seen in *Shakha-Prashakha*. This may have an autobiographical undertone. I once visited the nursing home where Ray was. I wanted to see his son who was with him. I knew that Mr Ray was too ill for me to hope to see him. I was told to wait and that his son would see me. I waited a long time and finally I was told that Sandip could not see me as his father was holding his hand and was resting.

I once was commenting on *Ganashatru* to Mr Ray himself. I said that the film struck me as his most musical. I used my hand to show the emotional pattern from a peak to a low point and then suddenly rising to a peak. Mr Ray added with approval that the conclusion proceeds in three leaps upwards, using his hand to describe the movement.

SATYAJIT RAY
Sandesh revived

Sandesh, a colourful periodical for children, came to link three generations, grandfather Upendrakishore Raychaudhuri (1863–1915), father Sukumar Ray (1887–1923) and son Satyajit. Started by Upendrakishore in May 1913, *Sandesh* carried the early writings and sketches of Sukumar Ray from some time in 1914 onwards. At Upendrakishore's death in December 1915, Sukumar took over as editor of *Sandesh*, continuing till his death in 1923. Sukumar was succeeded by his brother Subinay (1890–1945), who continued as editor till 1926. The family publishing concern, U. Ray and Sons, went into liquidation in January 1927, and *Sandesh* too naturally closed down. Subinay managed to revive it however for a brief spell in 1931-33.

Sandesh was reborn in May 1961, with Satyajit Ray and Subhas Mukhopadhyay, the eminent poet, as joint editors. For the first four monthly issues, Ray was busy editing, managing, translating limericks and illustrating most of the contributions to *Sandesh*; the fifth issue (September 1961) carried *Byomjatrir Diary*, his first story with Shonku, his madcap scientist. With Mukhopadhyay's resignation in April 1962, Ray was the lone editor, carrying more of the burden till April 1963, when Lila Majumdar, another eminent writer for children and a paternal aunt, came forward to collaborate with him. Nalini Das, his cousin, came in as a third member of the editorial team in May 1975.

The fine balance of stories, sketches, travelogues, items of general knowledge, riddles, and ample space for contributions by children themselves that had been part of the original *Sandesh* scenario continued till Ray's death in May 1992. *Sandesh* proved to be a source of creative inspiration for Ray, who could see a living, supportive connection between *Sandesh* and much of his filmmaking. In an interview in December 1980, he told *Cinewave* : 'You must have noticed this trend with me of spending all my time outside cinema for children, writing for them, illustrating for them. This has now gone on for nearly twenty years. Our *Sandesh* is now twenty years old.' He referred to 'the masses of letters, telephone calls, and direct requests from children,' 'most of the letters' coming to *Sandesh*, 'asking me to make films for children. I cannot pass these over.' Ray took great interest in and was deeply involved in the day to day running of *Sandesh*, replying in his calligraphic handwriting to most of the letters that came from the young readers of *Sandesh*.

In the editorial that appeared in the very first issue of *Sandesh* way back in 1913, Upendrakishore explained the connection between *sandesh*, the popular Bengali sweetmeat, and *Sandesh*, the children's periodical : 'The *sandesh* that we eat has two virtues : it tastes good, and it gives energy. If this periodical of ours that appears before people with the name *Sandesh* has these two virtues, i.e. if all who read it enjoy it and if it does them some good, then it would be worthy of its name.' Ray remained committed in *Sandesh* and his films for children to this double obligation—to entertain and to teach.

মহাশ্বেতা
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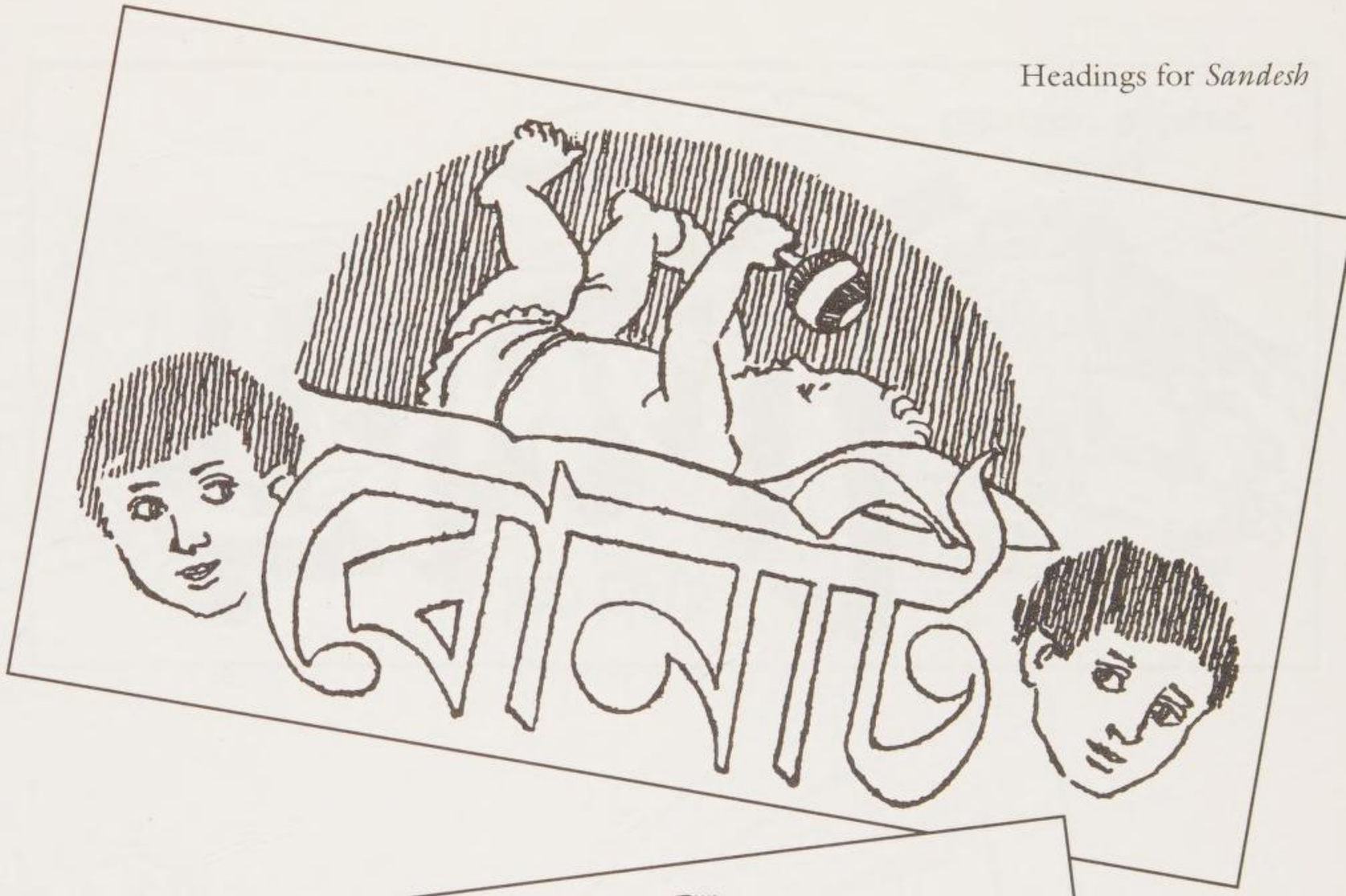

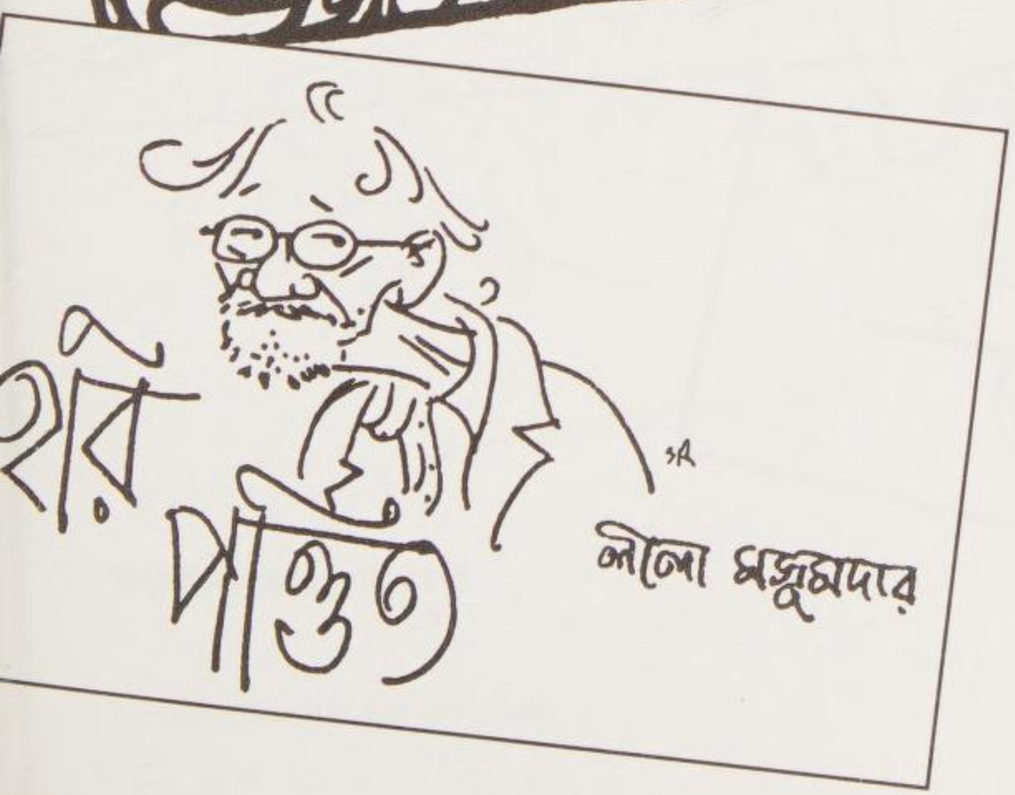
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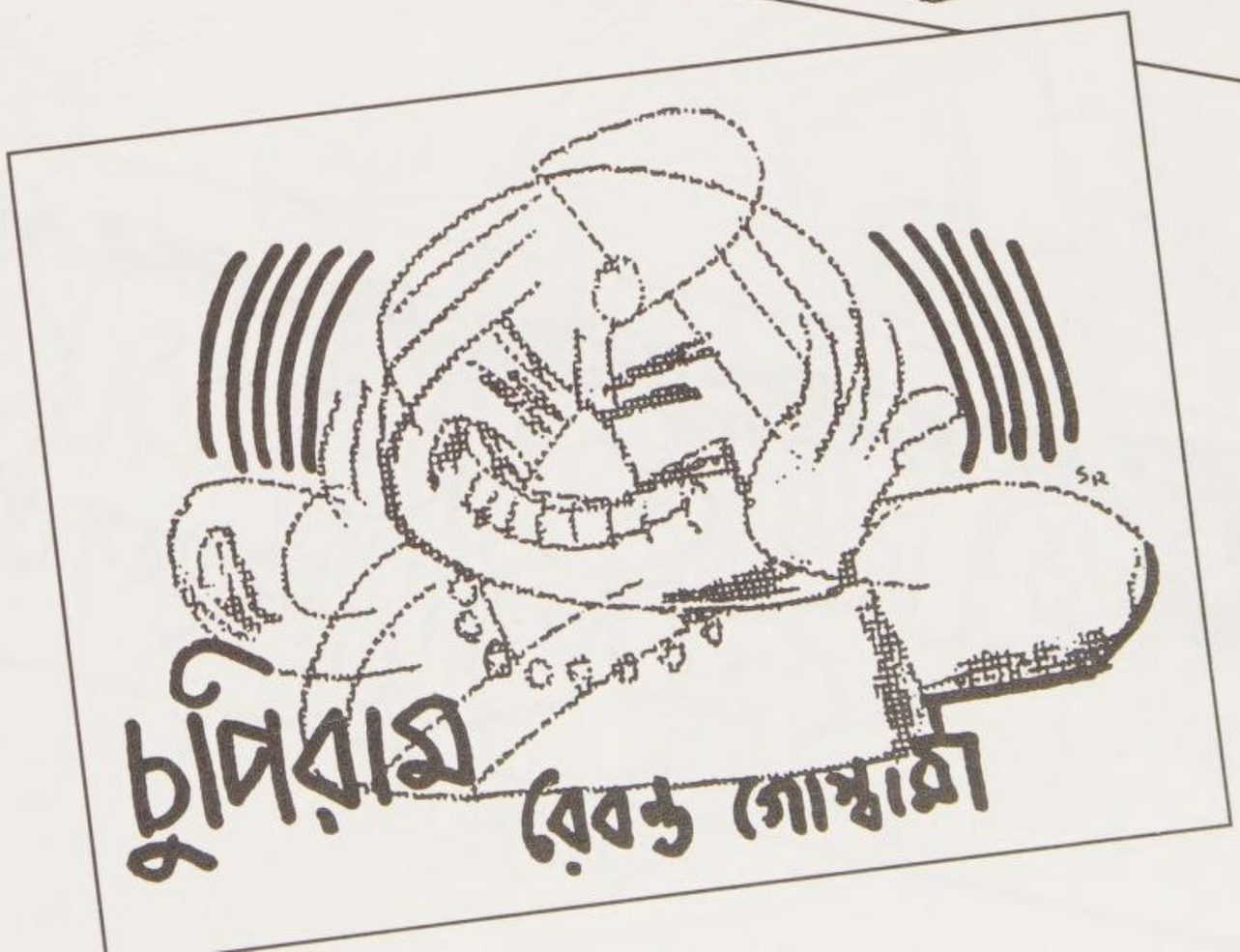
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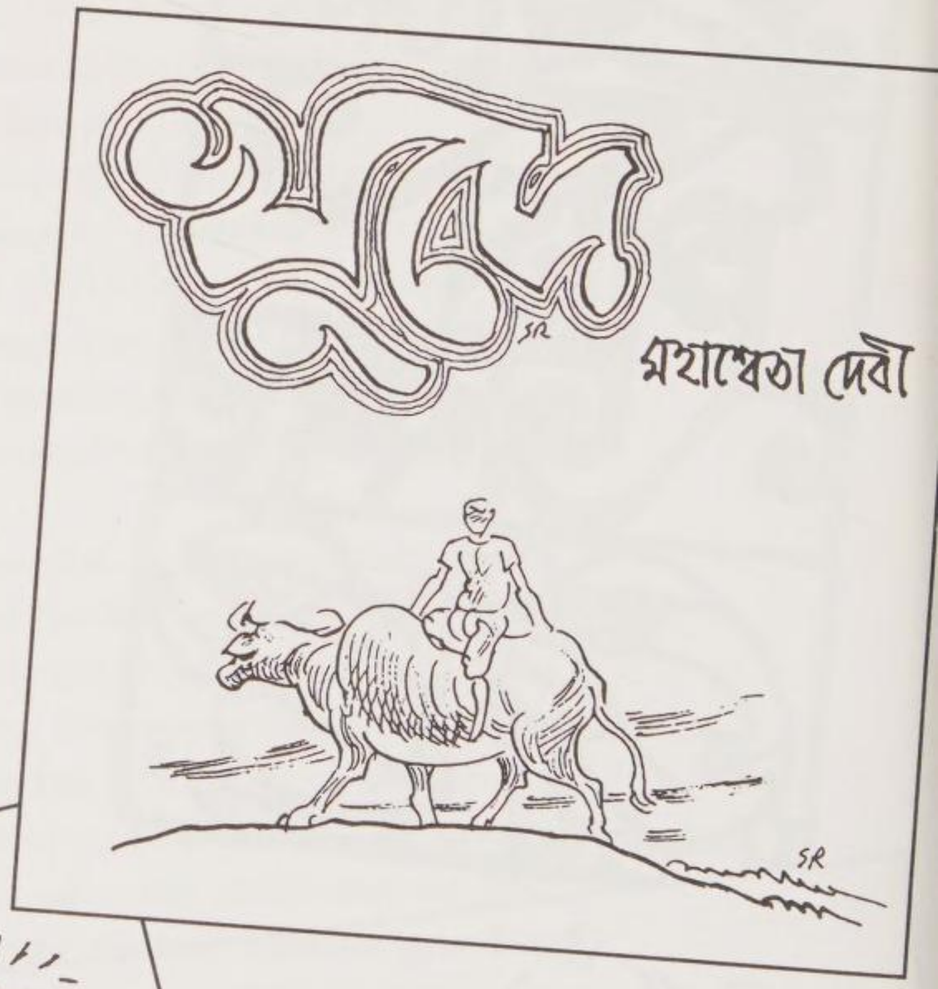
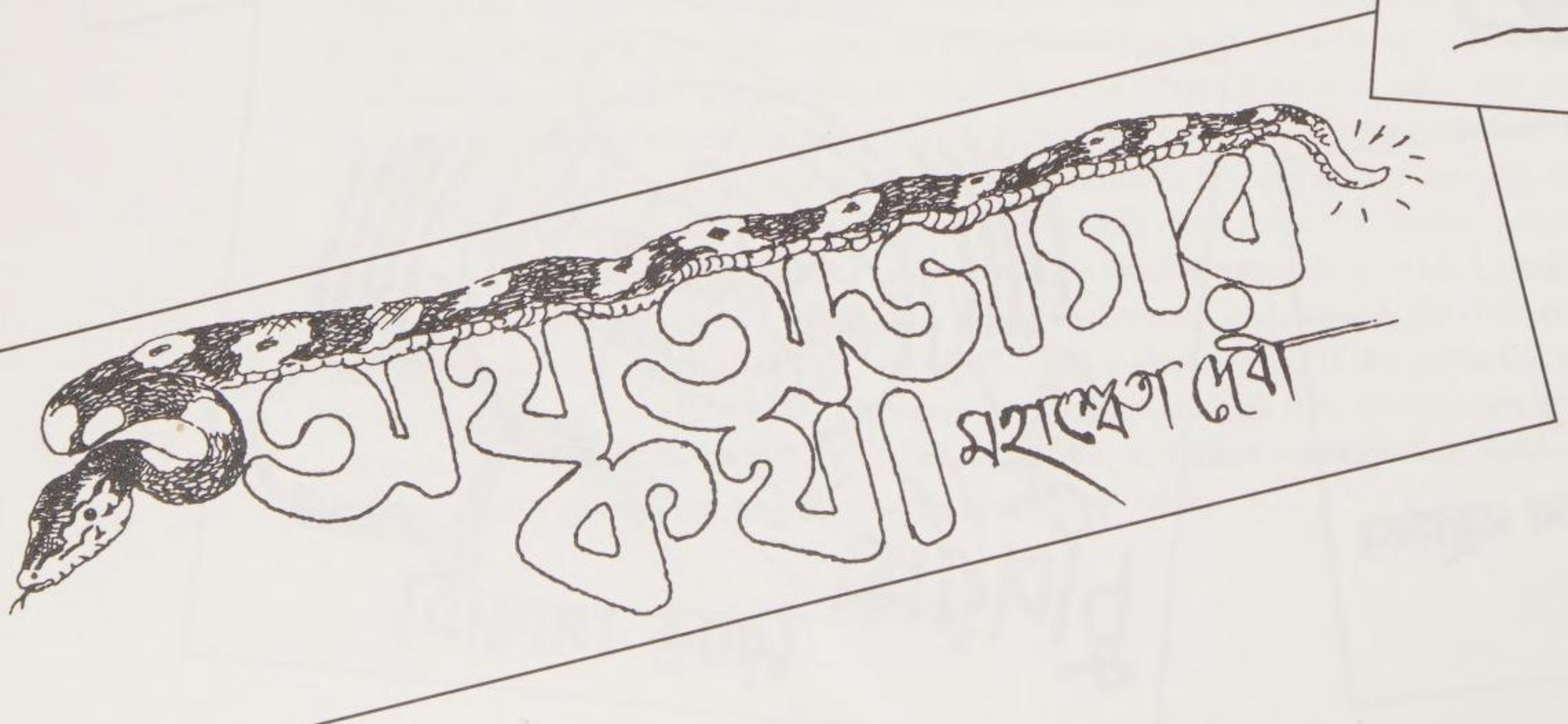
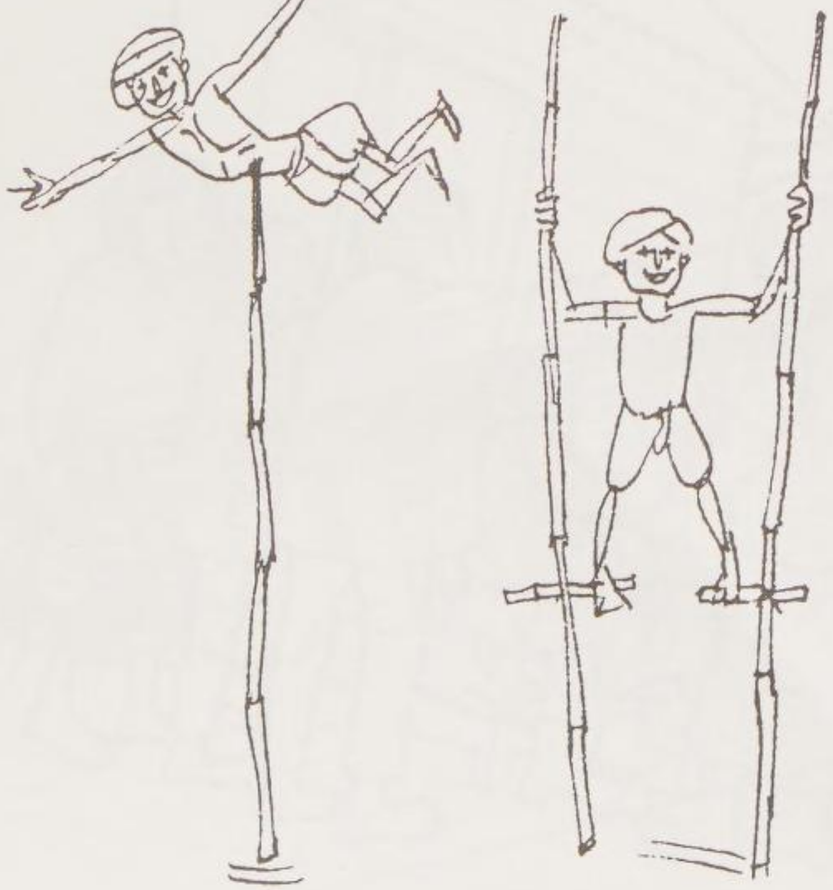


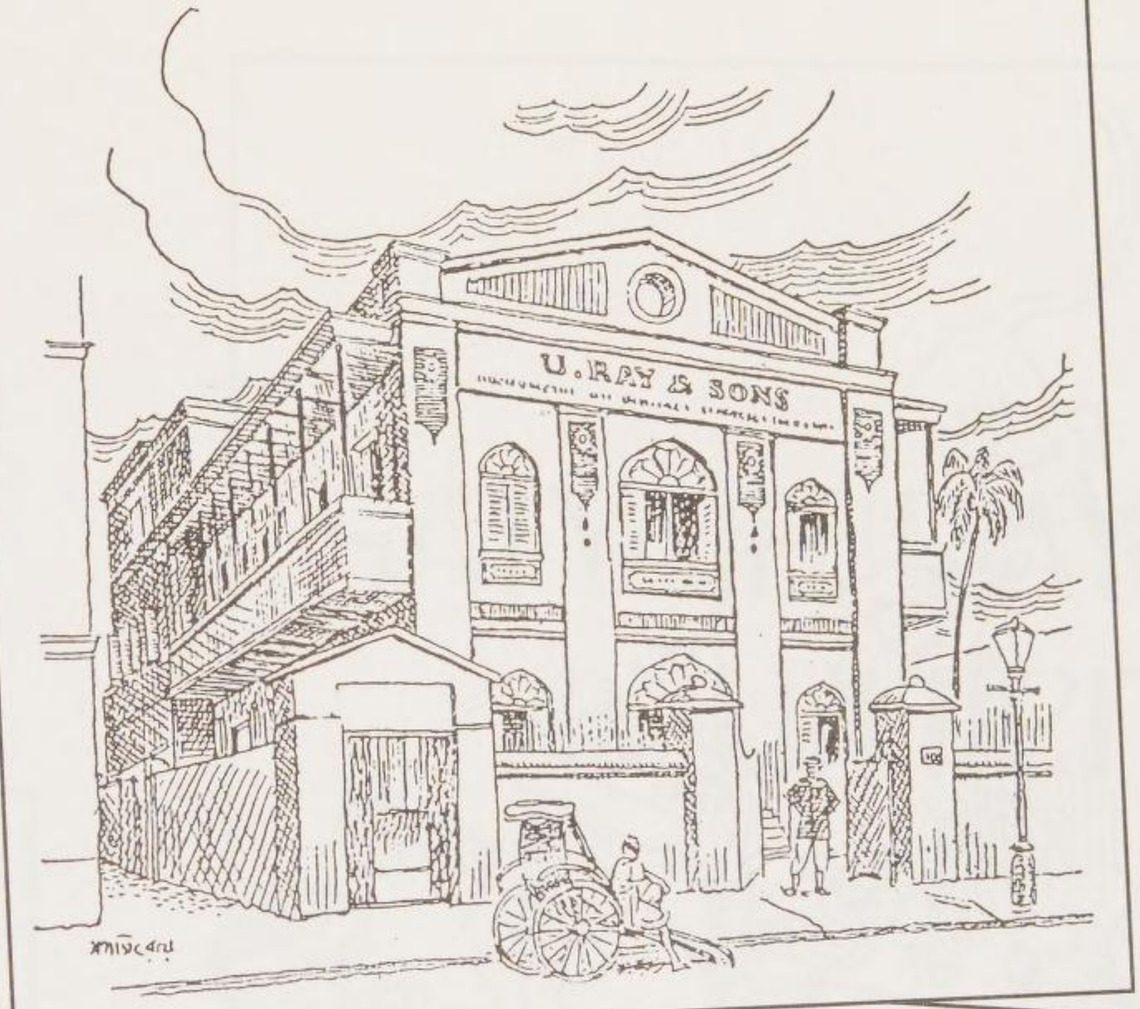


Headings for *Sandesh*

Illusrations for *Sandesh*



Illustrations for *Sandesh*



Illustrations for *Sandesh*

SATYAJIT RAY
writer

The Literary Works of Satyajit Ray

SAROJ BANDYOPADHYAY

1

Whether he became an international celebrity as filmmaker or not, Satyajit Ray was destined to step into the world of literature. Heredity pointed in that direction. As grandson of Upendrakishore and son of Sukumar Ray, he was ineluctably drawn to writing. Growing as a child, he had imbibed the sun and air, the days and nights of the world made by Subinoy Ray, Kuladaranjan, Punyalata and Sukhalata. There were other winds from outside that nurtured the budding childhood imagination of Lila Majumdar, who said, 'My entire childhood was suffused with the honey that flowed with the tales that these illiterate nurses told. It was something unique. It had nothing to do with learning and knowledge.' In the case of Satyajit, it was Chhedi, son of the maidservant Shyama, who brought in this whiff of air from outside. He had no tales to tell. But he had the capacity to extend and illuminate the horizon of Satyajit's mind with his key crackers, the special features of the treated thread he prepared for his kites, and the glow of the lantern he made out of the clay containers of curd. Leela Majumdar had something to say on the subject : 'Most adults read books for diversion or to gather material for discourses. Children read books to live, for sheer joy.' One has to have had a childhood laden with imagination to make an observation so full of reverence for childhood. Reverence for children and adolescents is a manifestation of faith in human values.

Satyajit Ray left his Gaḍpār home after his father's death in 1923, and accompanied his mother to Bhowanipur. Within a space of barely seven years, both Upendrakishore and Sukumar had passed away, the former at the age of fifty-two, and the latter at thirty-six. No boy cares for the sympathetic adult's 'poor boy!' Satyajit makes a memorable observation on this theme : 'It is only the adults who use the expression "poor boy!" Children themselves never consider themselves objects of pity.' The sense of dignity and independence, the capacity to find fulfilment all by themselves, and the inexhaustible love

for life that children bear within themselves have produced all over the world over the ages abiding works of literature for children. Satyajit Ray, in his *Jakhan Chhoto Chhilām* [When I was Little], and Leela Majumdar, in her autobiography and her *Āmār Galpa Lekhār Kathā* [The Story of how I came to write stories], recount a setting — their account throbbing with life — not dazzling with royal splendour, but full of the colourful wealth of life itself. The achievements of the people who made up this setting were not built upon the honours of British colonial rule. 'My younger uncle was a teacher at the City School. He wore a short *dhoti*, a *kurta* with loose arms, had a *chādar* on his shoulder, an umbrella in his hand and wore canvas shoes . . .' He never married, and felt it his obligation to 'visit all his relations and enquire about them regularly, travelling to their places by bus or even walking all the way.' He was an interesting man, with interesting dreams, including one in which he saw a procession in Calcutta, with the people shouting slogans : 'Energy! More Energy! We want more energy in our opium!' These men around Satyajit in his childhood were living embodiments of a sharp defiance of the colourless, predictable torpidity of urban life in a country under colonial subjugation. They were the first to realize the need to arouse the child's mind to an awareness beyond and unpolluted by the mechanical system of a semi-capitalist society bent on turning them into automatons running desperately after successful careers. They were confident of success in their mission. The entire family devoted all their initiative and endeavour to this single mission. There is no point in asking for whom Satyajit Ray wrote his literary works. He wrote his stories from the same urge that motivated Upendrakishore, Sukumar Ray and Leela Majumdar. When I first wrote about his fiction in the periodical *Mahanagar*, edited by another outstanding writer of fiction, Samaresh Bose (1924–88), Ray told me in a letter (7 June 1982) :

> I never thought my stories would be considered worthy of critical study. I had told myself that I would be content if all those for whom I wrote my stories were happy. I never thought of myself as a writer. All that I knew was that interesting plots came to my head, and when I came to write them out, a kind of tight order came naturally. There was nothing more to it.

In other words, Satyajit Ray wrote his stories only to tell stories for their own sake. What he calls the 'tight order' is what defined the construction, the technique and the structure of his stories. This was the aesthetic urge behind his stories. Even when the same aesthetic urge had led him to write stories that only adults would appreciate, what is significant is that he chose a young boy's world for the setting of his story. 'Pikoo's Diary' naturally comes to mind. It is the little boy, whose perspective is clouded over by the dark, contorted shadows cast by the moral decadence of his elders, who stands at the centre of this story. The yawning hole that the elders make in his uninspired universe becomes a poignant experience. 'The blue-streaked jelly' is a science fiction horror story, but at its core it remains a critique of modern men lusting for glory.

2

At the base of the corpus of Satyajit Ray's literary works lie his stories for children. Leela Majumdar once said that she wrote for children between the ages of twelve and sixteen. Ray never made any statement so definite. But anyone who comes to read his stories would realize that he aims at children a little more advanced in age and understanding. His stories are closely related to Ray's entire artistic life. He brings to his stories the anxiety and concern for humanity that haunted this great artist in his post-World War II setting. The one theme that runs through all his feature films made for adult consumption from *Pather Panchali* to *Agantuk* was the crisis in human relations. Wherever he located his happenings, whether in feudal Lucknow, or Victorian Calcutta, or a remote village, he focused invariably on the crisis in the relationships between individuals. World War II has elevated mankind on several scales, given them access to the moon itself, but, with all these achievements in technology, it has led to the withering of relations between individuals.

The one message that he conveyed through all those stories that he could not help writing, those stories that were not written with any particular readership in view, but were written for the story's sake, was that it was the worst dishonour for a human being to be alienated from life.

In 'Sujan Harbola', a fairytale for children, Ray follows the tradition of the Bengali fairytale, when Sujan, a commoner, acquires invincibility from his connection with nature. At the close of the story, Sujan tells the princess, sheltered all these years from the sight of the Sun, 'Don't stay confined to your room.' He tells her, 'Set your bird, the Hiramon, free. It's not right to keep birds caged.' In his story, 'Bipin-Babu's loss of memory', Bipin-Babu has to pay for his self-centredness, his unconcern at the plight of his childhood friend—in the logic of the story itself. There is an element of fun about the punishment, but the significance hinted at is unmistakable. Yet another story 'Sahadev-Babu's Portrait' illustrates with the same sense of inevitability the consequences of a self-centred, self-imposed isolation. One who leaves the main current of life is doomed to confront a crisis. In several stories, he shows people, once inseparably close to one another in childhood or adolescence, driven apart in their later pursuit of fame or glory or money. Ray takes care to show that such separation goes to impoverish life, as the modern hunt for commercial success turns a man away from the more positive values of life. 'Class friend', 'The Attic', and 'The Millionaire' give us the same theme, in their distinctively different narrative structures. A theme that comes back again and again in his stories is that it is not the apparent brightness of a particular part but the illumination of the whole that matters.

'The Maths Teacher, Mr Pink and Tipu' is an outstanding story. The Mathematics teacher will not let Tipu read books of fairytales. He tells Tipu's father, 'Call it what you will, the fairytale or *rupakatha* or *upakatha*, it comes to the same thing—they plant seeds of superstition in the minds of children.'

He would have liked to tear Tipu away from the lifestream of imagination and make him carry on along his own groove. It is not a question whether the groove is good or bad. It is the danger of the pattern imposed from above clamping down on Tipu and destroying for ever his capacity to stretch out the wings of his mind. The question is : is it not exactly this that the career-oriented education of our times is causing in many cases ? Tipu's mother is right when she says (what Tipus' mothers would not normally say), 'Why keep a man who can say something like that as a teacher ?' If the story had come up only to this point, it could have been merely a protest against the mechanical regulation of the modern system of education. But the story brings in Golapi-Babu, with his distinctive role. When he conveys to Tipu his creed of salvation through relieving people of their misery, and Tipu feels all the more strongly the pain of having lost for ever his fairytale world, the story itself rises to a different level. As the horse stretches out its supernatural wings, the story seems to fly aloft on those wings, along with Tipu's imagination fed on the Greek myths. These stories, with their eminently modern twists and turns, carry within them an adoration of life drawing on Tagore's philosophy of education.

Some of the simple humorous stories reveal, the moment the tissue of humour is removed, a stern criticism of life, or a shade of Chaplinesque pathos. 'The Felicitatory Scroll' [translated as 'The Citation'] is one such story, remarkable also as one of those stories by Ray where he achieves a technical perfection that one associates only with Tagore or Premendra Mitra or a very few like them. Shatadal Sanstha is a small town club. Every Bengali New Year's Day evening they have a celebration that features a reception. This particular year they had chosen the film star Samarkumar for the honour. Five days before the special day, Samarkumar had sent a telegram : 'Very sorry, I'm in Kalimpong.' He had a shooting assignment there, the best thing that could happen in the harsh summer heat. But the reception is an indispensable part of Shatadal Sanstha's New Year's Day celebrations. As the club Secretary puts it, 'It's a crisis !' Jayanta Sarkar, with his penchant for English idioms, describes it as 'What a catastrophe !' Chunilal, the Bengali teacher, advises them to make 'alternative arrangements.' The felicitatory scroll, written out already, would pose no problem, for it is addressed to 'O the wise one !' After all, any one could do for 'the wise one.' The text was general enough to cover a sportsman, a writer, an actor or an artist. But the problem now is to get hold of someone. Akshay Bagchi, a member of the club, comes up with a solution, when he proposes the painter Haralal Chakraborty for the honour. He lives in the town, and there are still people who remember his mythological paintings for children. The single consideration that is a clincher is that he lives in the town, and they could spare themselves the hassle of bringing someone down from Calcutta. Jayanta Sarkar's further argument that they were 'rescuing from oblivion' a veteran artist serves to strengthen the case. Nobody has ever seen Haralal-Babu. But the sign 'Haralal Chakraborty, artist' on the gate of Haralal-Babu's single-storeyed orange-painted house

makes it easy to locate him. The centrepiece of the flower garden is an *āmḍā* plant, a mockery of dreams of flowers. The man who comes out, when the visitors ask for Haralal Chakraborty, wears a *dhoti* in the manner of a *lungi* and a full-sleeved netted vest. He mumbles his consent to the proposal made by Shatadal Sanstha, and even sends a bio-data across the next day. The function is a success. The felicitatory scroll is appreciated. There is nobody asking any uncomfortable questions, as to who this man is. The recipient, in his reply to the felicitation, is properly modest, saying, 'I do not deserve this felicitation.' The day after, the felicitatory scroll is returned to the club office, with a letter saying, 'You can keep the scroll and put it to use next year by changing the name. Haralal Chakraborty passed away three years ago, in this very city.' The signatory to the letter is, significantly enough, Rasiklal (lit. one with a sense of humour), Haralal Chakraborty's brother, employed in the post office at Kanthi.

We laugh out when we come to the end of the story, but then we are stunned into a shocking sense of the heartlessness of a city that with all its obsession with pomp and show and self-aggrandisement remains unaware of and indifferent to the existence of an artist who lived in the city, and passed away unnoticed three years ago, and then offers him the farce of a routine felicitation when they must felicitate somebody ! — and what takes over is a bitter sadness for the ignored, unrecognized, unappreciated small town artist.

The real artist is not affected by such neglect. In his commitment to the dignity of art he can spurn the temptations of fame and money. The story 'Patal-Babu, Film Star' was written before 'The Felicitatory Scroll.' Patal-Babu too has been a failure. Once an actor in the theatre, he had had handbills announcing his stage appearances. He lost his job in the railway factory at a point when he was on the verge of making his mark in the theatre. To make a living then, he had had to take recourse to a whole wide range of professions—running a stationers' shop, as a clerk in a small office, as an insurance agent. When he is fifty-two, his fondly cherished histrionic desires find an opportunity, when Naresh Dutta, the youngest brother-in-law of his neighbour, Nishikanta Sen, chooses him for the role of a short, bald fifty-year-old in a film he is involved in. It is a pedestrian's role, 'a speaking part,' of an ill-tempered man, with a single piece of dialogue, the interjection 'Aah !' Even as he, with his memories of loud clapping in the theatre, finds the necessary mechanical details of a film shooting 'too much of bother over nothing,' he recalls his acting mentor Gagan Pakrashi's advice, 'However small a role you may be assigned, there's not the least dishonour in it.' Mr. Pakrashi had added, 'Every word in a play is like a fruit on a tree . . . You have to know how to pluck the fruit, peel its skin away, squeeze its juice out, and serve it to people !' Patal-Babu concentrates on that single interjection 'Aah !' and squeezes it through. The joy that is his when he has accomplished his task to perfection like a true artist is an indelible triumph for him in the midst of all the trivialities which constitute his everyday

life. He does not wait for the paltry sum that is his due for the job. He leaves the place with that sense of an artist's joy. In both 'The Felicitatory Scroll' and 'Patal-Babu, Film Star,' Ray has paid tribute to the sense of dignity that the artist, unconcerned about material success, brings to his work.

In many of his stories, Satyajit Ray upholds the extraordinariness of the ordinary man. Banku-Babu in the story 'Banku-Babu's Friend' and Asamanja-Babu in the story 'Asamanja-Babu's Dog' are representative types. In the demeaning existence as a teacher of geography in a primary school, Banku-Babu seeks sole sustenance in the wide-awake curiosity of a few of his little pupils. Banku-Babu's personality was so pathetically weak that he would submit uncomplainingly to any humiliation whatsoever. It is left to an extraterrestrial to come down to him and teach him that it is not right not to protest. Ray's science fiction stories have both imagination and science—but above everything else, they have humanism. In his stories in this genre he has quite a few messages for humankind. They are all simple messages, but nonetheless profound in their import. The messages include : one should not forget a childhood friend ('Class Friend'); one does not afford to forget one's first guide ('Two Magicians'); one should not let someone one loves to be measured in terms of money; in fact, if one tries to measure him that way, the one who measures should be driven away ('Asamanja-Babu's Dog'); merciless killing of animals is a sin ('Khagam' and 'The Last Night of Mr Shasmal'); one should not insult someone for no reason ('Bhuto').

In the novel *Phatikchand*, Bablu, in the forgotten Phatikchand phase of his little life, had had a glimpse of the free and wide vista of life, thanks to Harun. Without Harun, he would have never known of a life throbbing with such wild energy lying beyond the dark, cribbed, artificial conventionality that was characteristic of his upper middle class existence. A fraction of a man till then, Bablu had discovered the larger reality only through Harun. Even when he returned to his old locus he would retain with himself the new locus. In a world where most of the people were dislocated anyway, Harun had made a gem of a statement, 'Do you know how many kinds of artists there are ? You have to be old enough to know the particular style you need for a particular game.' It is a statement ultimately about the artist who knew the magic inherent in cinema, in musical composition, in the movement of the brush on the canvas, in the use of words, and left behind at his death a spell of liberation in joy for children and the grown-up alike. Bablu's final resolve proves conclusively that the humanism that Bablu has derived has come to a fullness : 'He has two wooden balls in his pocket. And a man that he knows so well—one who will serve him in so many ways—that he will harbour in a corner of his mind. A man called Sri Phatikchandra Pal.' It was this Phatikchandra Pal alias Photke who revealed to Bablu alias Nikhil Sannyal that the artist Harun, in his cheap, dirty shirt, and worn out shoes and awfully creased cotton trousers had a treasure so exceptionally his own that was nowhere to be found in the

glitzy facade of Sharadindu Sannyal's way of life. This incompleteness had remained hidden from Bablu so long. Now he knew it. The story of a lost memory returning becomes the story of knowing oneself.

3

Trilokeshwar Shonku stands as a proof of Satyajit Ray's extraordinary capacity for characterization. A reading of Shonku's diary is bound to bring Sukumar Ray's Heshoram Hunshiyari's diary to mind. Both of them have the same genius for nomenclature for every discovery they make of something never known. They both have the same daring and scientific commitment. The diary register is striking in both cases in terms of language and style. Humour predominates in Heshoram Hunshiyari's diary. But Shonku is no humorous character by any means. In his very introduction he establishes himself as a dedicated, self-confident scientist, a citizen of post-Independence India, a person of impeccable dignity. He is being invited all the time to international scientific seminars, where the scientific fraternity is full of praise and admiration for him. Shonku is an authentic Bengali, who would never tolerate a vulgar show of affluence. He does not lose his bearings at the sight of a white man, yet he would be patient with an insufferably crude neighbour, with a characteristically Bengali decency. All his discoveries are the first pioneering steps to several future discoveries, opening up unchartered horizons of potential discoveries. With the single exception of Annahilin, a deadly weapon of destruction for self-defence, all his discoveries are for human welfare. The Shonku stories combine the spirit of science and that of adventure. But once one runs through one's mind the entire gamut of Shonku stories all at once, one has the feeling that this Indian scientist has a statement to make in the cause of humanity, addressed to a West skilled in technology. Trilokeshwar Shonku is the son of Dr. Tripureshwar Shonku, who had told his son that all the money that he needed was the money that he had to use, and to never turn away from the poor. Shonku had not taken a patent for Miracurol, the remedy for all diseases, from his renunciation of wealth—as an Indian. There could have been the deeper fear that once the medicine became a plaything for the traders, there was the danger of its disappearance from the market. In the story of Demetrius Shonku tells the world not to step beyond proportion. For it is this lack of control over one's own self that spells doom to civilization. It is for man to live as man, not as a puppet or as a monster. In yet another outstanding story, 'Kompu', this small sphere called Kompu, probably the last invention of electronics, knows the answer to every possible human question. Even as it has learnt and let known, it has learnt that there is really no end to knowing. Like all those wise men of ancient India, it has never desired anything for itself. All that it has desired has been to leave to mankind the fruits of its knowledge, the ways and means by which mankind can save itself from natural calamities. And then, like the legendary Nachiketa, it has revealed at the end the information of having found

its own answer to its own ultimate question. Has the maker of Shonku identified himself with Shonku at times? Who is the man who was recalling his past in the afternoon of his life, with a lifetime of achievements behind him, in the story 'Swarnaparni'? Who is the man so deeply concerned over the growing expensiveness of medical treatment making it inaccessible to the poor? Shonku's philosophy of the universe, his anti-fascism, his concern for the common man, his capacity to challenge humbug, are all manifestations of the larger humanism of Satyajit Ray himself. In 'Professor Shonku in the aspect of Saturn', drawing on the concept of the Doppelgänger (as Ray specified in a letter to me), and of course the story 'Ratan-Babu and that man,' which, strictly speaking, lies beyond this series, the charm grows out of a profound statement about life. There is no other story of this kind so aesthetically satisfying in the Bengali language.

4

We now move on to his Felu-da series of stories, those stories that have made Ray a very special favourite with the adolescents. Shonku is unique; Uncle Tarini would capture the heart of any congregation; he can send shivers down the reader's spine with his stories of the supernatural; he could never repeat the achievement of a story like 'Khagam'; I am yet to read a ghost story like 'Anath-Babu's Terror'. Yet it is his detective stories that have been Ray's most popular work.

With his 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' in 1841, Edgar Allan Poe brought the genre of detective fiction into being. But long before him, there had been two classics of the wonder and joy of investigation transformed into great art—*Oedipus the King* and *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. But it was left to Poe to give this new genre a definitive identity through his stories. Some time later, a century ago, Doyle had conceived Holmes. Doyle records in his notebooks how Sherlock Holmes bypassed Sherringford Holmes and Sherrington Hope to establish himself for times to come, in 'A Study in Scarlet'. Holmes' method for the unravelling of truth soon came to command the status of a classic. It could not have claimed any value more than that of a mechanical riddle, if it had been merely an exercise of intelligence or a demonstration of strategy. But what the story of detection has gone on proving right from its origin is the existence of hidden currents and vicious eddies and whirlpools underneath the apparently unruffled surface of the life of man in society. Civilization has led mankind several steps forward, but has not been able to shut down for ever all the dark caverns. A study of mythical literature too shows conclusively how crime has entered human life through ignorance, but man had held within himself right from the start the seeds of his fall. The importance that the novel has given to this fall has its own value. But the story of investigation or detection gives a different kind of importance to the same drama of the fall. Whatever relative valuation one makes of the quality

of the treatment of the fall, one has to apply different standards of judgement. Judged as a story, Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Krishnakanta's Will* may appear as the story of the murder of Rohini. But it is only when the true story is read in terms of the murder of Gobindalal's 'Virtue' that one can feel an agony much stronger than what is associated with the act of bloodshed, in the bloodshot, inner anguish rising out of a man. One can take a different perspective and see how if Sharadindu Banerjee, in his story 'The Original Vice', had chosen to take it from the opposite end, the narrative could have slipped into the domain of the true novel, something that perhaps has happened at least partly anyway. The justification for such a perspective lies in the story of *Hamlet*, which is organized from the reverse end.

It is only in modern society that there has been a proliferation of the crime detection narrative. The detective story exposes all the inner contradictions that lie beneath the apparent dazzle of capitalist society. These stories point to all those secret serpents lurking behind the bourgeois practice of living, and occasionally raising their terrible heads. The shrewd investigator quite often tears down the veils of apparent complacence that middle class society keeps up. Since in most cases he is not part of the state's police force, his independent investigation is for all practical purposes a study of human character carried out by a discerning social being. As the private detective unravels a miscarriage of justice that had taken place a decade and a half ago, or how a judge's weakness has had far-reaching consequences, or where there lay hidden a poisoned knife behind apparent civility, or how a murderous urge had sought means for fulfilment in the victim's trust, or how murder, never to be pardoned, seems once a while as an act of justice, he serves to point to the cancer that grows in modern society and the modern family.

There is a special dignity about the very role of the private detective. As part of the regular police force, a Poirot or a Holmes or a Byomkesh Bakshi or a Felu-da would never have drawn our attention. The very word 'police' suggests the twin associations of typically formal, institutionalized efficacy, and reliance on muscle power, building up to a kind of resistance; whereas the private detective is an individualist, who catches his deep water prey by dint of his detective intelligence and the snares it conjures up. If a detective story is read as a five act play, the police make their entry only in the last scene of the fifth act. Till then the private detective operates all by himself. The method of detection that this lonely private detective adopts is strikingly different in every case. Holmes felt it imperative to analyse the object and the subject. The deductive method drawn from the indigenous Indian medical sciences that Rakhal Mustafi presents to Holmes and Watson, in Parashuram's story 'Neel Tara', is only too Holmesian, but proves the effectiveness of the Holmesian method. Poirot follows a different route altogether. He seeks the line of probability through analysis of character, for he knows that every murder has a character of its own. The deeper recesses of the victim's character become for him the primary

object of investigation. Agatha Christie bears the hallmark of a modern detective story writer in the way she illuminates, in the course of her storytelling, a complex social reality, particularly in the way in which it has been affected by time after the two World Wars and in the years between. The old Miss Marple is a wonderful guide to English country life. Citizen Poirot and Miss Marple in the country complement each other in a way. I shall never forget the denouement of 'Four-fifty from Paddington'.

5

Pradosh Mitra, as Ray himself calls him, or Mr Mittir, as Lalmohan-Babu calls him, or ABCD, i.e. Asia's Brightest Crime Detector, the title that Lalmohan-Babu has given him, or Felu-da, as Tapash or Topshey calls him, is the most popular investigator in Bengali detective literature. The Felu-da novelettes, written for children, have enjoyed pride of place among novels and stories for adult readers appearing in the annual autumn issue of the literary periodical *Desh*. Year after year, adults and children have fought one another for the privilege of being the first reader of the Felu-da story in the family. One needs to take stock of the tradition of crime detection literature in Bengali before one goes any further. Arindam Devendravijay was the first popular investigator in the tradition. The detective stories around him carry the shades of romance so typical of the age of Bankimchandra [Bankimchandra Chatterjee, 1838–94]. I can never forget Zuleikha, the exquisite beauty and a criminal to boot, who has a secret passion in her heart for Devendravijay. Pānchkaḍi-Babu [Pānchkaḍi Dey, 1873–1945] seems to waver between the option of sticking to the spirit of Bankimchandra's romances and breaking off into a style of his own. It was left to Sharadindu Banerjee [1899–1970], with his Byomkesh stories, to give the Bengali detective fiction a place of its own. The Byomkesh stories went far beyond the familiar conventions in conception and development of character, in plot construction, in narrative style. They never give one the feeling that one is reading an adaptation of some foreign stuff. In a story or two however, one may detect shades of some foreign source; for example, there is a similarity between Agatha Christie's 'Murder in the Mews' and Sharadindu Banerjee's 'The Original Vice', in terms of the organization of the action. While the murderer takes advantage of the celebrations of Guy Fawkes' Night in the first case, he has the fireworks of a Kali-puja night to hide his act in the second case. The psychological twist with which Banerjee unravels the mystery at the end of his story 'The Insect in the Flame' reminds one of the stunning revelation at the end of Agatha Christie's *Five Little Pigs*. But Byomkesh towers above all these minor similarities, with his essentially Bengali identity, and the indigenous craftsmanship of his method of detection. He is a detective natural in his Bengali *dhoti* and kurta. He steers clear of sensational encounters. Byomkesh Bakshi remains such a favourite of his readers, because he confines himself to the skills of intelligence that keep the pleasures of pure detection intact.

If Felu-da had not arrived on time, Bengali detectivedom would have remained deserted after Byomkesh's exit. Byomkesh remains the only Bengali detective who can match Felu Mittir. Premendra Mitra's [1904–88] Parashar followed Byomkesh. But Premendra Mitra chose to make Parashar comical, and even as he tried to combine his fascination for poetry and the art of detection, he failed to achieve any kind of success. To put it more bluntly, Parashar never gained the credibility that Mitra's Ghana-da achieved so naturally amidst all the improbabilities that he revelled in. Parashar seemed to have been given his poetic pretensions only to make up for his inadequacy as a detective. But somehow they do not connect organically.

Then came Felu-da. In his very first appearance in 'Felu-da's Detective Acts', a story that appeared in the periodical *Sandesh*, towards the end of 1965, we could identify him immediately as one of us. While the children, for whom the story was written, was charmed by the quiet humour and warmth in the relationship between Felu-da and Topshey, the adults appreciated the lack of any pretentiousness about Felu-da's method of detection. The situation appeared as a riddle that Felu-da has to unravel with his straightforward, probing intelligence. There were two other minor points that drew our attention. Ray has several stories that draw on school life experiences, as for example in his story 'The Attic'; this is a feature that appeared first in his first detective story. The other point about this story centres round one of its characters, Tinkaḍi-Babu. The mystery at the heart of the story has to do with the relationship between Tinkaḍi-Babu and Rajen-Babu. Tinkaḍi-Babu appears as a famous author of mystery stories writing under the pseudonym of 'Guptachar' (lit 'secret agent'). Not much of a character as such in this first detective story, he has the seeds that would develop eventually into the fullblown Lalmohan Ganguly or Jatayu, author of bestseller mysteries.

Felu-da was born in 1935, and opened his account in the detection of crime in 1965, when he was twenty-seven. Personally I have no faith in astrology. Felu Mittir too probably had no such faith. But, all on a sudden, even as he asks whether the *kumbha rashi* is good for a detective, he reveals the information that he was born under the *kumbha rashi*. From whatever little I know of astrological lore, the *sinha*, the *tula* or the *vrishchika* would have been a better *rashi* for him than the *kumbha*. But it is Felu's unfailing sense of humour that gives the sign of the *kumbha* (lit. a jar) a special significance. For Felu speaks little, and stores a lot in his head. He is a full jar, and will not give the sounds that an empty jar will give. He is a six-footer, a rarity among Bengalis, and not one of the more typical tribe of Bengalis, lazy and slow and cumbrous. He has a tight and taut figure, without any extra fat anywhere about it, a body shaped by a regular course of physical exercise and *asanas*. Unlike the common Bengali, he hates turgidity, and practises extreme economy in speech, with a mastery in precision. We can read an ancestry in wit, when in 'Felu-da's Detective Acts', Felu says, 'I'm developing a curiosity

about curios;' or when, in the story, 'The Emperor's Ring', he hears a weird cry coming from the direction of Banbehari-Babu's house, gives a big yawn, and says 'hyena' ('hye', yawn, + 'na', no,—in Bengali)! One has to have the inheritance of grandfather Upendrakishore and father Sukumar to be able to give such dexterity with words to the most popular hero of our times. Felu Mittir can hit the bull's eye at once, he is far superior in physical agility to the average Bengali, he does not have the Bengali's typical finicalness about food. He has the capacity for adjustment with any situation. And yet he remains an authentic Bengali, his Bengali identity evident in his natural friendliness and affectionateness, in the way he maintains his relationship with Lalmohan-Babu, so finely tuned in the mode of humour, or in the way he shelters the boy Tapash from any serious risk. We can sense his human kindliness in both these relationships. There is an amusing sign of his Bengali identity in yet another feature : though he can adjust himself to the demands of any new situation, and is extremely open and liberal in the matter of food, he remains a Bengali in his taste for rice, the *moog* pulse, the fish curry, the *chutney*, the curd, and the sweet betel leaf at the end of it all. But his real favourites are the *sandesh* made with the new jaggery and the *mihidana*. Felu-da, who belongs to Calcutta, prefers the *khasta kochuri* and the *dālmoot* to anything else, for his late afternoon snack. When being entertained, he shows a preference for the more traditional sherbet and *sandesh* to tea or coffee. Felu Mittir had landed a regular job once—but only for a short spell. He threw up the job himself. He does not seem to have made a stack of money for himself, spending his own resources so often as he has been doing, on his pursuits. In 'The Affair's in Kedarnath This Time', the man, who had given him the assignment initially, cancels the assignment for reasons of his own. But Felu-da on the trail is too involved already to give up just like that. He does not care for any letter of appointment or assignment. There is evidence here that he does not have much money, for Lalmohan, Topshey and Felu make the trip to Haridwar in the three-tier sleeper class, when they have to pay for themselves. He never buys a car for himself, and can make do with Lalmohan-Babu's green Ambassador. He is equally indifferent to the need for a house of his own. Of the men he holds in reverence Uncle Sidhu is fully deserving of his reverence for the values he lives by, in his total dedication to acquiring knowledge, in his love for his country and in his indifference to the external world. This young man, with his sharp intelligence, has a special capacity for unravelling quibbles, more fascinating in fact than his skill in the act of unravelling a crime. In the story 'The Emperor's Ring', the criminal's identity and address are exposed with the discovery of the connection between the words 'spy' and 'spider'. The artistic skill evident in the action of Felu Mittir's penetrating intelligence unravelling the famous riddle—reminiscent of the one in Tagore's 'The Hidden Treasure'—in 'The Royal Bengal Mystery' is an astounding and thrilling experience for the reader. The English words in Greek letters in his private notebook are yet another example of his love

for play with words. The case of a bird, in its attempt at repeating 'Three nine three nine eight two zero', changing it to 'Trinayan trinayan ektu zero,' and other such improvisations add an additional dimension to Felu Mittir's detective stories. The finest story in this manner is 'The Curse of Chhinnamasta'. Children and adults alike break into exclamations of spontaneous admiration at the brilliant wordplay of 'Kailash' (the name of a mountain) meaning 'Koi Lash', i.e. 'Where is the dead body?' or the English word 'key' hidden in the Bengali 'kee paini kee khunjchhi?' (lit. 'What haven't I got? What am I looking for?'); or the English historian Gibbon emerging out of the word 'bāndar', meaning monkey in Bengali, with a suggestion of a species in the ape family. In his memories of childhood Ray retained a strong element of wordplay, and an even stronger stock of performances of magic spectacle. A striking feature of most of his detective stories is the exercise of the art of detection to expose the secret behind a piece of magic. One can understand his revulsion from the grimness of murder or crime or a headily bloody and scary atmosphere. Satyajit Ray remains the noble-hearted artist in whatever role he chooses for himself, whether in the medium of cinema, or in that of literature. Writing for children, he would not like the horror of a murder to hang heavy over the spirit of his story. Hence he often draws in the suspense of a piece of magic or a riddle. Ray's Felu-da stories do not have the clever use of folk poetry or nursery rhymes, as it surfaces in several of Agatha Christie's stories, or those evocations of popular proverbs ascribed to Kalidasa in the titles of Sharadindu Banerjee's stories. But his stories always carry with them the play of a refined, delicately cultivated brain indulging in an ambience of pure intellection. And it is this spirit of the works that draws children and adults alike to Felu Mittir. There are two more elements, not entirely absent in the other detectives in the pantheon, but not in the same fine proportion. Jatayu describes it as the *majāru sajāru* (lit. funster – porcupine, but a play of words, with the natural *āru* of *sajāru*, the porcupine, added to *majā*, fun, to make *majāru*, a neologism, originally created by Sukumar Ray) aspect of Felu. It is a matter of Felu Mittir's moods. That is how Lalmohan-Babu the writer would characterize Felu Mittir's talent for the sharp and crisp sentence that carries the charm of satire and mockery as well as its bite. Secondly, Felu Mittir has had a fair lot of interesting enough city cases like 'Trouble in the Graveyard'; but he is in his element in non-Bengali settings—in Rajasthan (for 'The Golden Fortress'), in Shimla (for 'The Mystery of the Box', translated as 'A Mysterious Case'), in Benaras (for 'Glory to Baba Felunath'), in Nepal (for 'All the Trouble in Kathmandu'), in Sikkim (for 'Confusion in Gangtok'), and even London and Hong Kong. Just as Baghdad, Mesopotamia, or the Caribbean region adds a different flavour to several of Agatha Christie's stories, and yet do not turn into travellers' guidebooks, so also Felu Mittir's adventures never degenerate into romances set in travelogues. Every human being has within himself/herself a restless adolescent with an ear for the call of the faraway. With the same intense,

perennial wanderlust deeply ingrained in his being, Felu Mittir remains a comrade of the young and the old alike.

6

Poirot–Hastings' closest friend thought, 'It is very necessary for a man of my abilities to admire himself —and for that one needs stimulation from outside. I cannot, truly I cannot, sit in a chair all day reflecting how truly admirable I am. One needs the human touch. One needs—as they say nowadays—the stooge.' But Felu's thoughts about Lalmohan are cast differently. Lalmohan or Jatayu joins Felu Mittir for the first time in 'The Golden Fortress'. But from then on he is indispensable, even inevitable. Felu Mittir's comment about him is revealing : ' You and I complement each other. Like borax to gold. You have stayed stuck to me with Araldite ever since our days at the Golden Fortress. You can't exist without me—and vice versa.' There has never been a character like Lalmohan-Babu in any detective story. In Agatha Christie's Poirot stories, a woman writer friend Ariadne Oliver makes occasional appearances. She too is keenly interested in murder mysteries, and revels in flights of the weirdest imagination. Some of her characteristic features, like her indecisions about a hairstyle, are quite amusing. But in conception of character, Lalmohan stands a class apart. From the moment Lalmohan-Babu enters the story of Felu Mittir and Topshey, the pattern is completed with the famous three musketeers—Pradosh Mitra, Lalmohan and Topshey—forming a neat triad. One wonders why Felu loved Lalmohan. Maybe it was a strange camaraderie born of the attraction of opposites. But the real explanation lies in the fact that Felu Mittir is in reality what Lalmohan-Babu desires to become in his secret hopes. Lalmohan-Babu is fully aware of the fact that the detective character that he has created is ultimately only a strange fictional character, while Felu is still stranger but nonetheless real. As a character, Lalmohan-Babu has been picked up from the contemporary book trade—one of those authors, whose titles have no shelf life at all, going in for reprints every month—'selling like hot *kachuris*.' They have glaring mistakes that cause Jatayu no discomfiture, for he can always make corrections in the next edition. He gives strange titles, with a flair for alliteration, to his works—*Honduras-ey Hahakar* ('Lamentation in Honduras'), *Atalāntikey Ātanka* ('Panic in the Atlantic'), *Manchuria-r Romāncha* ('Adventure in Manchuria'). The works of Felu Mittir's creator share the same bestseller status, and his titles too have the same tendency to alliteration. How old is Lalmohan-Babu? There is a hint in one of his own statements that would indicate that he is three years and a half older than Felu. That is how he can offer blessings to Felu when presenting him with a watch. They would not have maintained the more formal *āpni* as the mode of address if they had been the same age. The distancing 'Mister Mittir' too

points to a difference in age. Lalmohan-Babu, in addressing Topshey, never calls him Topshey with its overfamiliarity; he prefers to call him 'Brother Tapash'; which is something noteworthy. He comes from an ordinary middle class family, and has remained unmarried. His father had two more brothers. He was the second of his father's sons. Lalmohan-Babu's younger uncle had joined the terrorist underground in 1929, had taken a shot at the Police Commissioner of the district of Khulna, and had absconded. His example could have been the source for Lalmohan's reverence for courage and adventure. He may have drawn from the same source his fascination for secret weapons. The Nepali kukri, the boomerang, and the smoke bomb prove useful in the very last phase of several of Felu Mittir's expeditions. It would not be fair to put the Felu–Lalmohan relationship at par with the Holmes–Watson, Poirot–Hastings and Byomkesh–Ajit relationships. Lalmohan–Babu is not the narrator of the Felu Mittir stories—the way Ajit and Watson are for their heroes. Tapash is the narrator of these stories. Is Lalmohan then Felu Mittir's assistant? That too is not a role he fits into. In fact, he has not yet arrived in 'The Badshah's Ring,' and yet that does not make the plot any less interesting. He arrives in 'The Golden Fortress', and then onwards it becomes difficult to conceive a Felu-da story without him. When someone with Felu-da's wide-awake alertness and maybe a self-confidence too to match it acknowledges Lalmohan-Babu as his complement, there must be something to it. What can it be ?

Both Felu Mittir and Lalmohan-Babu are authentic Bengalis—but in very different ways. Felu Mittir has the height that Bengalis should have had. Lalmohan-Babu's height represents their actual average. Felu Mittir goes by mathematics, Lalmohan by imagination. Felu Mittir is never thrilled. Lalmohan is, at the slightest provocation. Felu Mittir is the hero of adventures. Lalmohan appreciates them. Felu-da is taciturn, going quite often into spells of solitude with his notebook. Lalmohan talks a little too much. The ordinary Bengali runs after reputation. Felu-da, an extraordinary Bengali, does not care for popular acclaim. Felu Mittir is a maker of humour rooted in wit. Lalmohan is a source of humour, with his different responses to different situations. The author has used Lalmohan-Babu, with a delicate touch of humour, as the excuse to make a few statements. One of these statements takes a snipe at the bestsellers. Lalmohan takes pride as an author of bestsellers, making mistakes in his works, with Felu correcting them for the following editions. Felu had prepared the draft for Lalmohan's *The Buccaneer of Bombay*, a story of the Bombay cinema type, a draft that bears the impress of the pen of Felu's maker rather than that of Felu. When a modest Lalmohan would like to describe it as 'our story,' Felu Mittir objects—Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is indebted to elements drawn from so many sources, but would Shakespeare ever describe it as 'our *Hamlet*'? Lalmohan has a natural simplicity that lends to humour. Felu temperamentally is restrained and sombre.

Felu is conscious of his own standing, but is not one to be affected by it, the way Lalmohan is. It is an achievement on the part of Ray to have redeemed Lalmohan from the dullness of the second character in the detective story. Whatever value Lalmohan has in these stories is his own. He has made quite a few quotable statements, some of them unforgettable, e.g. 'So it's Bengal for *Mān* (lit. 'honour'), and Bombay for Money.' 'Haven't I told you already that I have more imagination than the common man ? You speak of a tiger, and I see a tower of flame, with a particularly vicious-looking monster baring its fangs from within it, and a jet plane taking off with a roar enough to burst one's ear drums. If that is not provocation enough to lose consciousness, then why should I have a consciousness in the first place ?' Even better known is Lalmohan-Babu's example of Babu English – 'Chicken had yesterday, Mutton-i *hok* (Bengali for 'Let's have') tomorrow;' or '*Sher* (Hindi for 'tiger') *to* (Bengali for 'so') *bhāgā* (Hindi for 'run away'), but how ?' There is a gem of a piece of Lalmohan-Babu on the tele–phone : 'The circus which escaped from the Great Majestic Tiger !' But he is at his glorious best when in panic, he says '*Han*-yes,' combining two yes-es, one in Bengali, the other in English.

Playing with words is a special feature of the Felu-da stories. In 'Hullabaloo in Gosainpur,' the unravelling of the mystery begins in a piece of wordplay. But it is left to Lalmohan-Babu to create a funny situation in 'All the Trouble in Kathmandu,' where Maganlal the villain serves 'Uncle', that is, Lalmohan-Babu, with LSD in his tea, instead of sugar cubes. Under the spell of the drug, Lalmohan-Babu spills gems of malapropisms like 'Om Manipadme Humki,' the 'Hum' of the Buddhist mantra transformed to *humki* (lit. 'a threat') and 'antibiotiktiki,' 'antibiotic' taking on a *tiktiki*, the domestic wall lizard, at the end of it. 'LSD' read as 'Pound, Shilling, Pence' is of course an improvisation by Felu Mittir. Devendravijay, initially Arindam's assistant and *shagird* in Pānchkaḍi Dey's stories, had soon come to be a superior master in the craft. Lalmohan-Babu does not quite manage anything like that — he was not made to be one. But in 'The Rose-tinted Pearl', he did draw from Felu Mittir recognition and acclaim in the form of a perfect *namaskar*. In this case at least, it was a brilliant flash of Lalmohan-Babu's independent intuition that saved Felu Mittir from defeat. The little girl in Ambar Sen's house had been looking for Lalmohan-Babu or Jatayu by himself, the way we too have looked for, an unmistakable evidence of his popularity. His creator had enough love for him to bring him the gift of the Balagopala, The child Krishna, made of gold. If Jatayu's *kachuris* went cold some day, the ever smiling lively old gentleman could fall back on the gold Balagopala to tide him over the financial crisis.

7

Time to come to Topshey—Master Tapeshranjan Mitra, the one who recounts the Felu Mittir stories. We are quite prepared to let a few lapses go by, only because they come from his pen. In 'Darjeeling

Asthir,' for example, a postmortem of the victim would have shown the poison. The readability of the Felu-da stories draws considerably from the qualities of Tapesh's age, education and narrative style alike. Tapesh's easy success in making an account such delightful reading draws primarily on his language. Most novels for adolescent readers crash with the futile efforts to capture in the style the liveliness of the adolescents' natural expression—the efforts appearing as ridiculous as that of someone shaving his moustache off, wearing shorts, and claiming the privilege of travelling on half-tickets ! The one great exception in our literature is of course Lila Majumdar. It is my contention that it is Topshey's prose that has made the Felu Mittir stories so popular. It is a prose that is charged with the essential quality of Ray's films, the art of the precisely essential, just the little that needs to be put across. There is not a single sentence ever in Topshey's accounts that is superfluous. His narrative has the capacity of bringing things to sharp focus. When Topshey says,

> The hectic Bheda river, in a mad rush to plunge into the Damodar, skirts or leaps over countless pebbles, small and large, or not so large but big enough, of several sizes and colours too, black and white and grey and ashen, plain and dappled, levelling them and polishing them through the ages, in the course of its journey. Rajrappa is the place where it takes the plunge. —

we have the visual experience of a river running to its destination captured in the movement of the prose itself.

Compare yet another instance :

> I had been told already that the pilot needs a lot of skill to make a landing at Hong Kong, a speck of a landing strip, with the sea on three sides—a slight miscalculation could lead to a plop, or if it got more serious, it would go bang against the hills.

The 'plop' (*jhapāng*, in Bengali) and the 'bang' (*daḍām*) are enough to convey the impact of the danger—and that is where Topshey's narrative scores so effectively. And there is of course the subtle, detached humour that is always there. When Appa Rao, the fight director, in 'Scandal in Kailash,' faints at the sight of a real dead body in the cave, a short, crisp sentence, with its unexpected spurt of humour, is the handiwork of a real humorist.

Tapesh is unassuming and intelligent, a quiet and spirited adolescent, with an individuality of his own, and with utter contempt for the nagging of all those who would offer him unsolicited wisdom. In terms of physical and mental acuity, he is as flexible as a cane, and as keen as an arrow. But for his greatest virtue, he is completely reticent about himself. He is almost silent on what school he goes to, or who his friends are, whether he goes to an English medium school (for his English is impeccable). He tells us of the poet Baikuntha-Babu, Jatayu's Bengali Master in the Atheneum School, but he has

nothing to say about any of his own teachers. His taciturnity is admirable. When Felu Mittir occasionally makes fun of Lalmohan, hitting at him with banter, Tapesh does not smile for once, but enjoys it all with a stony face. It is his narration of it that brings out his appreciation of the joke. Ray could have dropped him as the observer/narrator, and start writing so-called crime stories for adult readers. In a letter to me (22 Januaryy 1984), Ray told me :

> Let me close this letter with a personal problem. I am facing serious problems with both Shonku and Felu-da. I have already used up all the major elements or staples of the science fiction or fantasy, in my Shonku stories. I'm worried about the future. It's the same with Felu-da. There are many limitations when it comes to writing detective stories for adolescents. For one has to leave out most kinds of crime as adult material. Sharadindu-Babu did not have to face this problem. But I have to face it. And yet they are now all so close to me that I cannot think of banishing them.

On our part, we too cannot think of the Felu-da stories without Topshey. One can see how the narration wilts, once it is shunted beyond Topshey's point of view—in the fourth chapter of 'The Mystery of the Orange-tinted Pearl.' 'The Story of Jaichand Baral' is based on something that Topshey has only heard. All the taste, the fun and the tension of the Felu-da stories stand on the three pillars—Felu Mittir, Jatayu and Tapesh. If even a single pillar is removed from this structure, it will no longer remain a Felu Mittir story, whatever else it may be. The Felu-da stories represent a new current flowing into the mainstream of the Bengali detective fiction. It is Tapesh's narratorial style that gives this current its speed and its drama. The unforgettable Sharadindu Banerjee had been for years the model for economy in narration, the exemplar for a style that could put the maximum into the minimum of words and avoid religiously a frothy, turgid flow of useless words. From now on the Felu-da stories will be the new model, with Topshey as the teller of those tales. This narrative style has its intrinsic value. One can quote here Felu-da himself, advising Topshey on style : 'If you can avoid an overload of rusty adjectives and the so-called learned expressions, and go straight for what you've seen, that will serve the purpose best.' That would more or less describe the essence of Satyajit Ray's prose style.

8

Besides the problem that Ray touched on in his letter to me, there was yet another artistic problem that he had to confront. It was not the problem of translating a written story into cinematic terms. It was the insurmountable problem of the artist with access to two media of equal potency—the camera and the pen—being pulled in two opposite directions. When he wields his pen to tell a story, there is Ray the director or filmmaker seeking to make the subject as visual as he can make it. When he takes

his stand behind the camera, he would still like to use the camera to tell as much of the story as possible, and this tendency became particularly strong in the last phase of his filmmaking. *Nayak* can be cited as evidence of how autonomous a camera-borne story can be. When he made films out of his own stories, as with 'Pikoo,' he could achieve the autonomous significance that lay in the idiom of the camera. I raise the question of 'Pikoo' here, for the story and the film in this case can almost rival each other in terms of artistic achievement. Story and film have almost the same outline. But the distance between the written story and the film is no less evident for that similarity. Did Ray have the idea of the film at the back of his mind when he was writing the story? It need not have been there anyway. And that is why the written story has a strength of technique that places it at one of the peaks of Ray's literary career. In 'Pikoo's Diary,' Satyajit Ray brings to bear upon the tradition of concern for the child, the development of his mind, the sheer love for children, and awareness of the psychology of the child, that he had inherited from all those Rays in his ancestry, from Upendrakishore and Sukumar and Subinoy to Sukhalata and Punyalata and Lila Majumdar, his own concern with his own times and his society. Between the polarities of the child's loneliness and the old man's, he charts the story of the breakdown of a bourgeois marriage. He makes use of a child's perspective to achieve his purpose. Yet there is a striking difference between the ending of the story and that of the film.

'Pikoo's Diary' records :

> I went and found it all quiet Grandpa was lying in bed, but not asleep so I asked him Grandpa what's the matter Grandpa didn't say a word only went on looking towards the ceiling towards the Usha fan the only Usha fan was in Grandpa's room it was GEC in the rest of the rooms I heard the telephone ring and rushed upstairs to pick it up must have rung many times already I said Hello and heard is Mister Sarma there I said there's no Sarma here wrong number and banged it down I was panting after the run so I lay down on the sofa and raised my feet for mother was not around I raised my feet and saw they were dirty but mother wasn't there. Now I am writing my diary again in bed there are no pages left there is no one else here its me and Grandpa only and a fly that comes again and again a nuisance real awful the fly and that's the end of the page end of the book and the end.

We can set beside this the sounds and visuals of the ending of the film *Pikoo*, where against the sound (off) of Hitesh starting the car and driving away with a honk, we see a close shot of Pikoo, with tears in his eyes. Then :

> A fashionable glass flower vase on the table with a few green leaves and a single flower. A purple flower.

> Pikoo gazes at the flower for a few moments. Then he brings his eyes down to peer at the plastic bag on his lap. He draws a purple crayon out from the bag. Then he opens the drawing book on a new page, draws his shirtsleeves up, wipes his tears away, and starts drawing a purple flower with the purple crayon. The camera pulls back.
> It is raining outside.
> Pikoo, alone in the verandah, goes on drawing.

The independent identities of story and film become clearer through such an exercise. In the written story, it is the impression of the disintegration of a marriage as it touches Pikoo's immature perspective that comes into prominence; the boy appearing as only an observer. In the film it is Pikoo's loneliness that dominates; a loneliness that becomes harsher still with his grandfather's death. The film is a more agonizing experience than the written story.

But Satyajit Ray's films and stories have ultimately striven to hold on to one another, the grip of one on the other often becoming a strain. I shall refer to two stories—'The Affair's in Kedarnath,' the story, and *Shakha-Prashakha*, the film. In the story, Pavan Deo, the younger prince, plays a special role with his telephotography that serves to make the story as visual as it could be. In the eighth chapter of the story we can read in visual terms something that could serve as a script for an outdoor shooting. When he came to make *Shakha-Prashakha,* Ray seemed to have realized that his outdoor shooting days were over for ever; and he sought to place himself behind the camera and to use it just to tell a story. In both the cases he sought to compensate for what was not to be any longer. And it remained unrealized. Shadows had started gathering over that favourite mountain peak of ours, so redolent of wonders.

Translated from Bengali by Samik Bandyopadhyay

SATYAJIT RAY
making of Pather Panchali

Satyajit Ray never forgot the first day's shooting of *Pather Panchali* that afternoon in October 1952 on location seventy-five miles away from Calcutta. There was never a screenplay as such for *Pather Panchali*, but only a visual script of dynamic sketches and scribblings, which in a way had grown out of Ray's illustrations for a children's version of the original novel, in the early forties. As he recalled later, 'There were eight on our unit of whom only one—Bansi, the art director—had previous professional experience. We had a new cameraman, Subrata, and an old, much used Wall camera which happened to be the only one available for hire on that particular day. It was an episode in the screenplay where the two children of the story, brother and sister, stray from their village and chance upon a field of *kaash* flowers. The two have had a quarrel, and here in this enchanted setting they are reconciled and their long journey is rewarded by their first sight of a railway train. I chose to begin with this scene because on paper it seemed both effective and simple. I considered this important, because the whole idea behind launching the production with only eight thousand rupees in the bank was to produce quickly and cheaply a reasonable length of rough cut which we hoped would establish our bonafides, the lack of which had so far stood in the way of our getting a financier.'

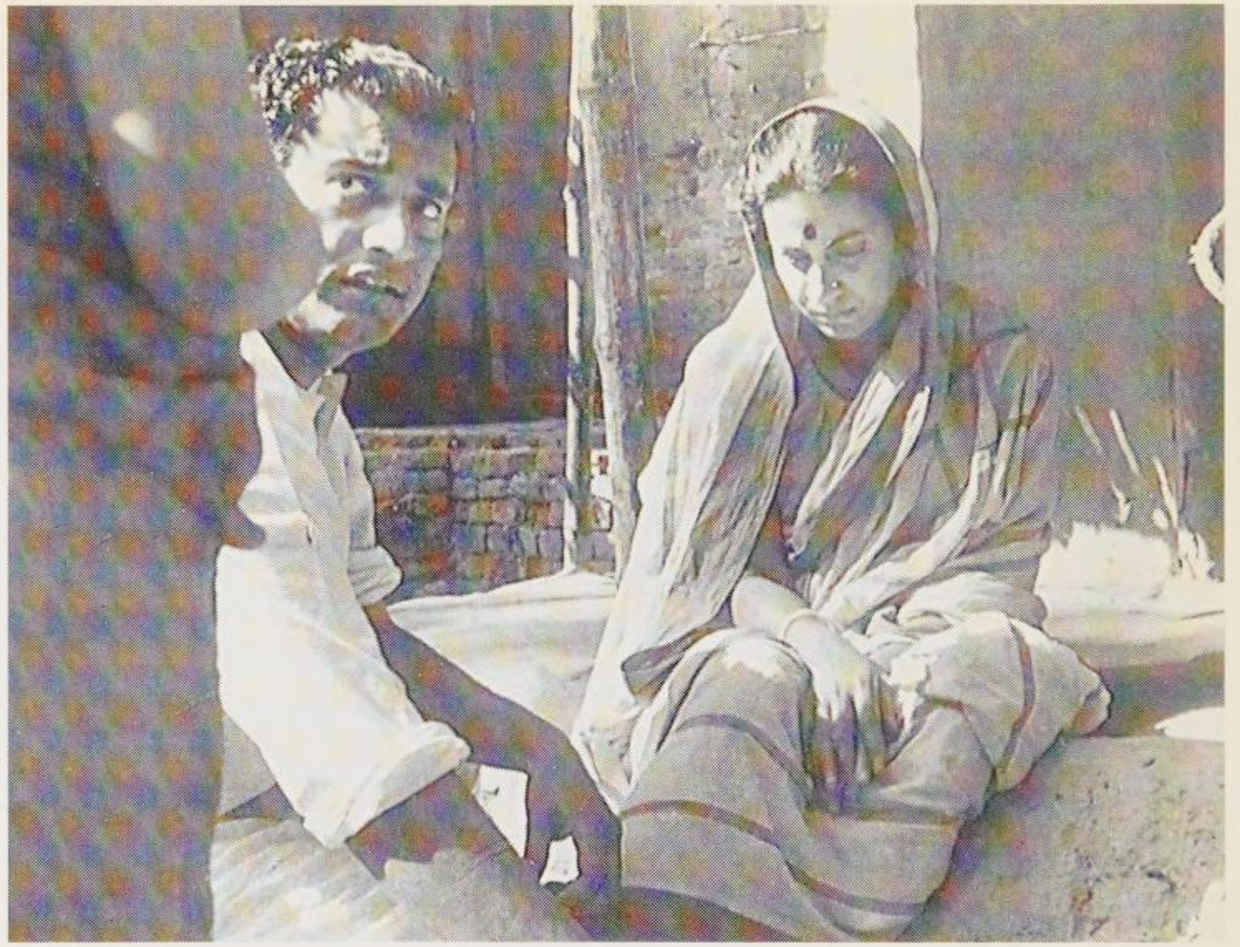
Most of the eight shots taken on the first day's shooting 'had to be dropped,' as Subrata Mitra tells us, 'for they showed the children's walk at too slow a pace;' though Ray was happy, 'The children behaved naturally, which was a bit of luck because I hadn't tested them;' and Mitra felt, 'my work on the whole was quite satisfactory, and the scene looked beautiful.'

Ray had drawn courage and inspiration to make *Pather Panchali* from the example of *Bicycle Thieves* (though stylistically and philosophically there is nothing in common between the two) — in the manner in which he made it, outside the studio and its system, and learning/mastering the craft even as he went along, and that too as part of that team which had Mitra and Bansi Chandragupta as its two other partners. While Mitra would later say, 'For all practical purposes, *Pather Panchali* was our diploma film;' Ray would say, 'Both *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito* are largely the work of amateurs as far as the externals of technique are concerned.'

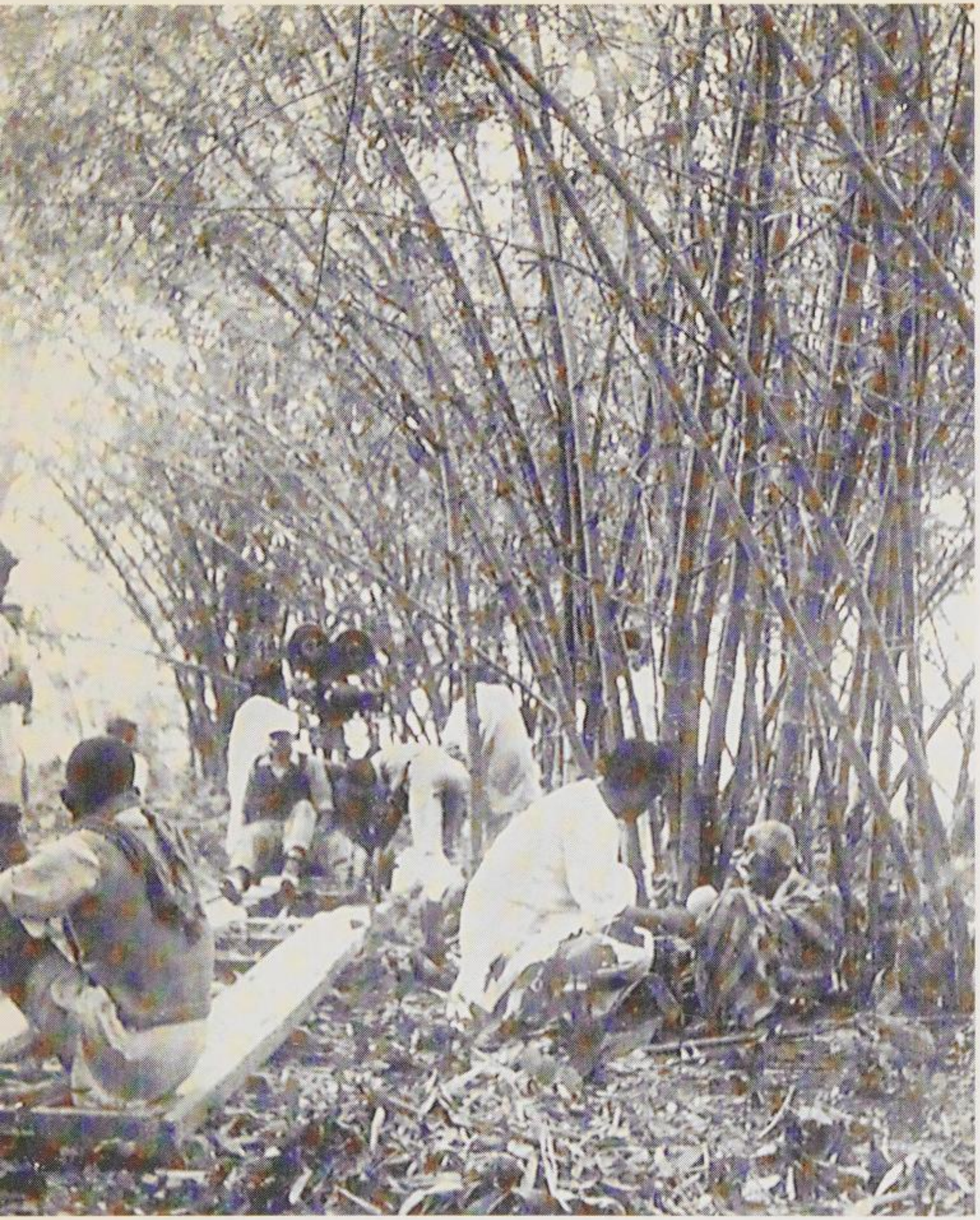
Maybe that is why the making of *Pather Panchali* demanded a lot of care, close interaction between actors and actresses and director and cinematographer, and warm camaraderie and sharing, evident in the stills that follow, in which a seasoned veteran actress, a city-bred young woman, with a background in nonprofessional radical theatre, making her debut in cinema, in a role so different from whatever life she had known, and of course the children, are handled and moulded lovingly to fit into the world that is Apu's. The rugged amateurishness that gives *Pather Panchali* its distinction is only all too evident in this collection of sketches and working stills.

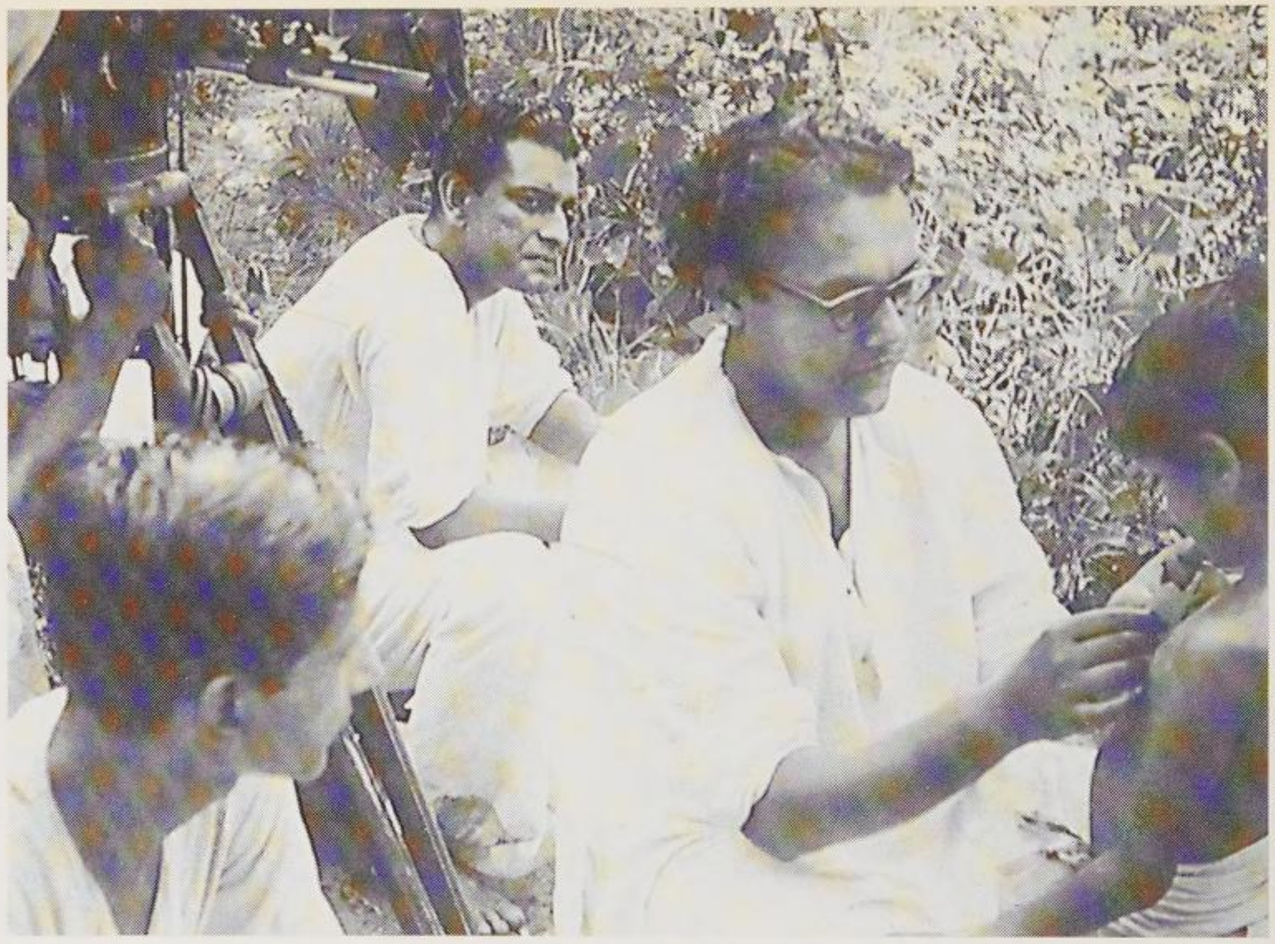
Pages from the *Pather Panchali* sketchbook that served for the script — a running series of wash drawings, 'in the manner of comics', now deposited in the Cinémathèque at Paris.

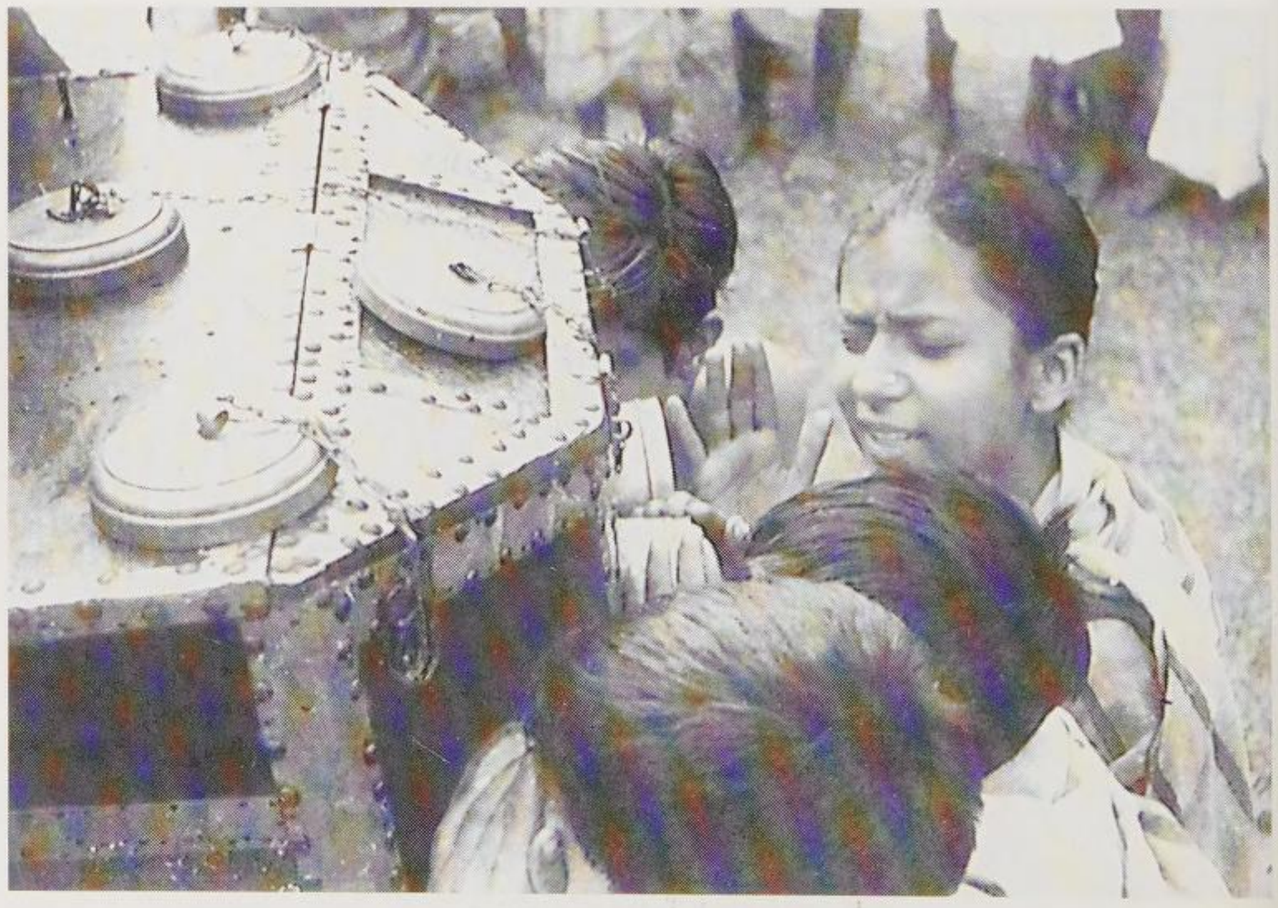
Shooting in progress : with Mitra and Ray in consultation, with Karuna Banerjee waiting at right (Above Left); the *kaash* fields (Above Right); waiting for the right formation of the clouds (Right).



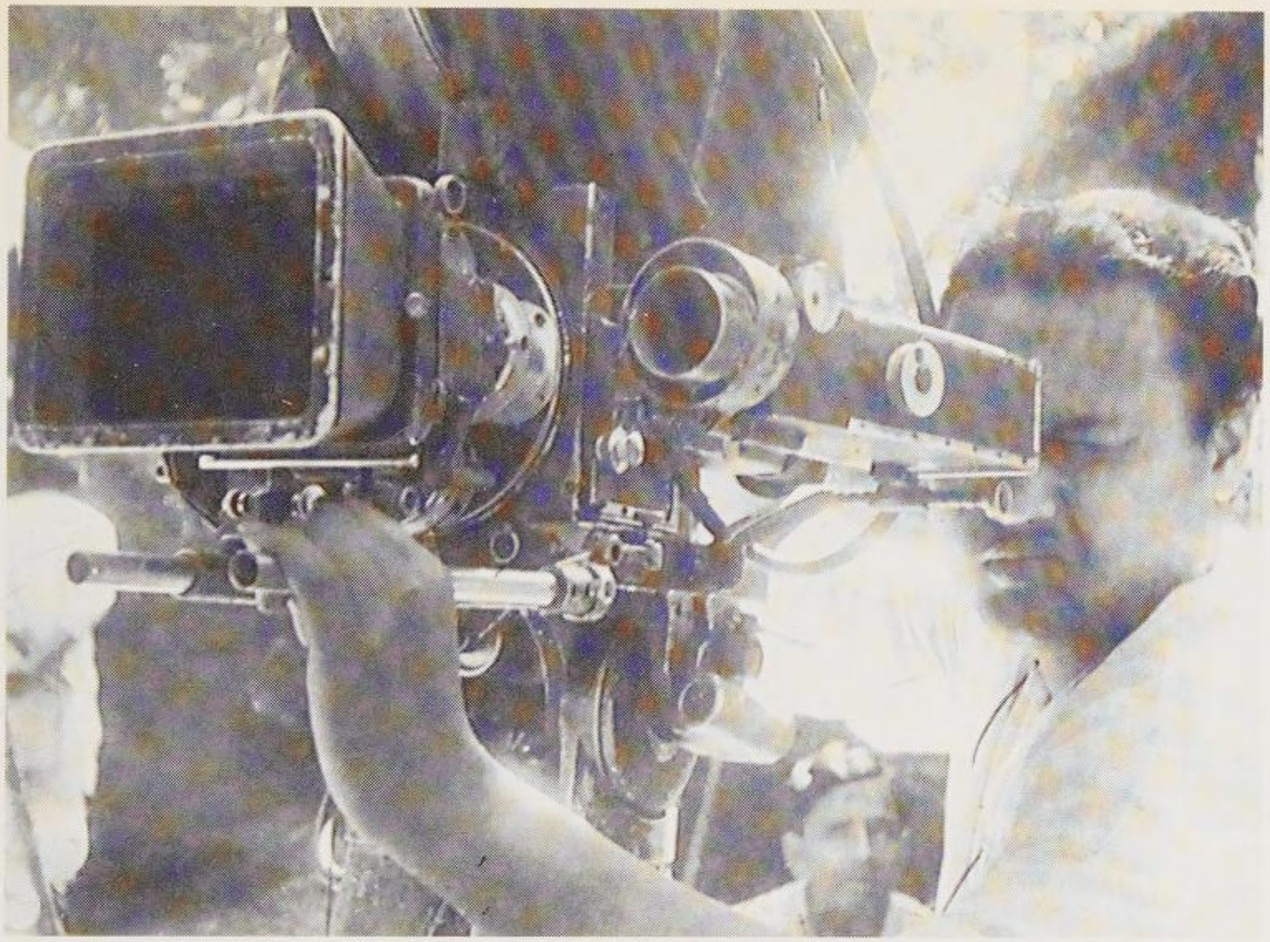
CLOCKWISE : Ray instructing Uma Dasgupta as Durga; with Karuna Banerjee on the ledge that is so much a part of the film; Bansi Chandragupta with Subir; Uma in a break in the shooting.

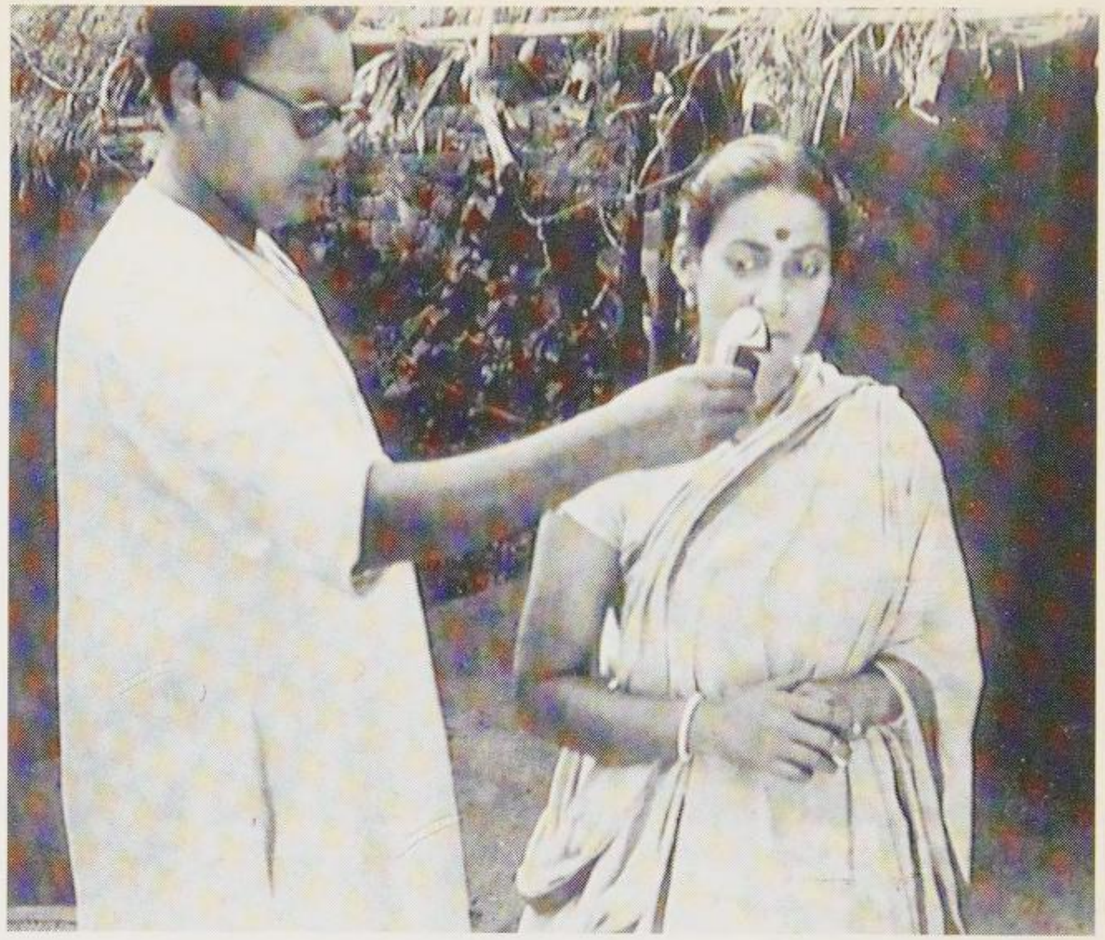


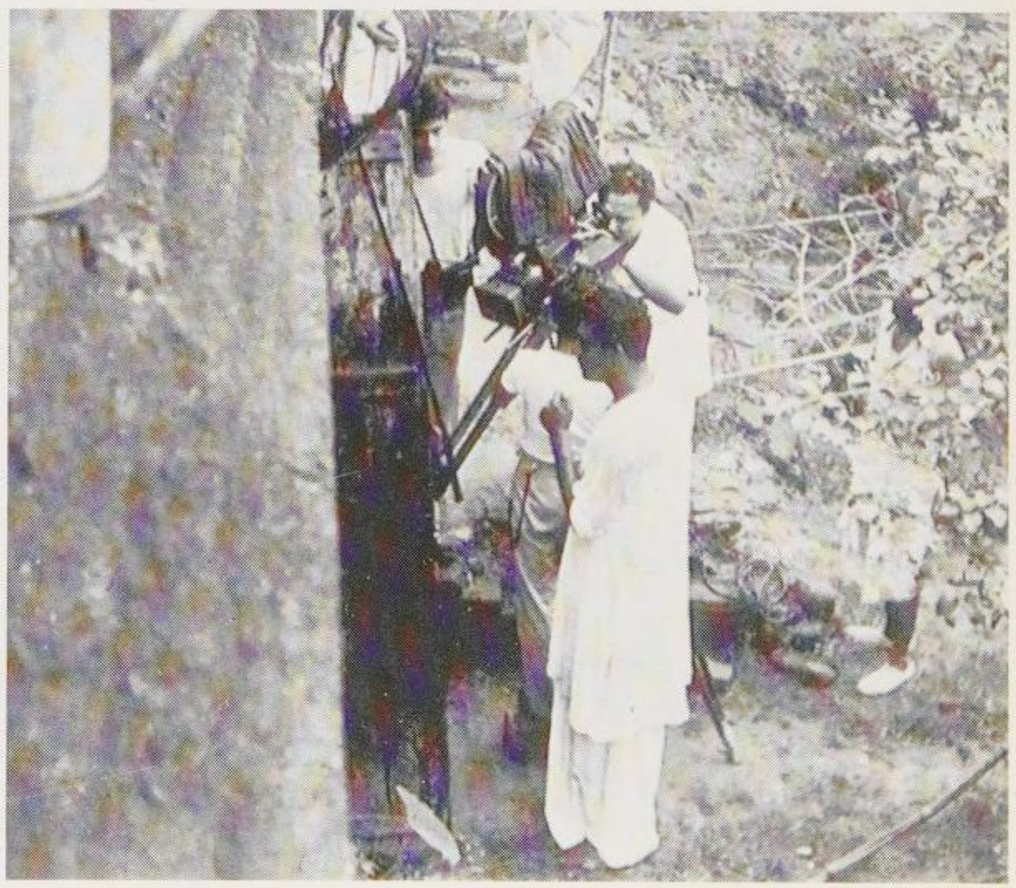




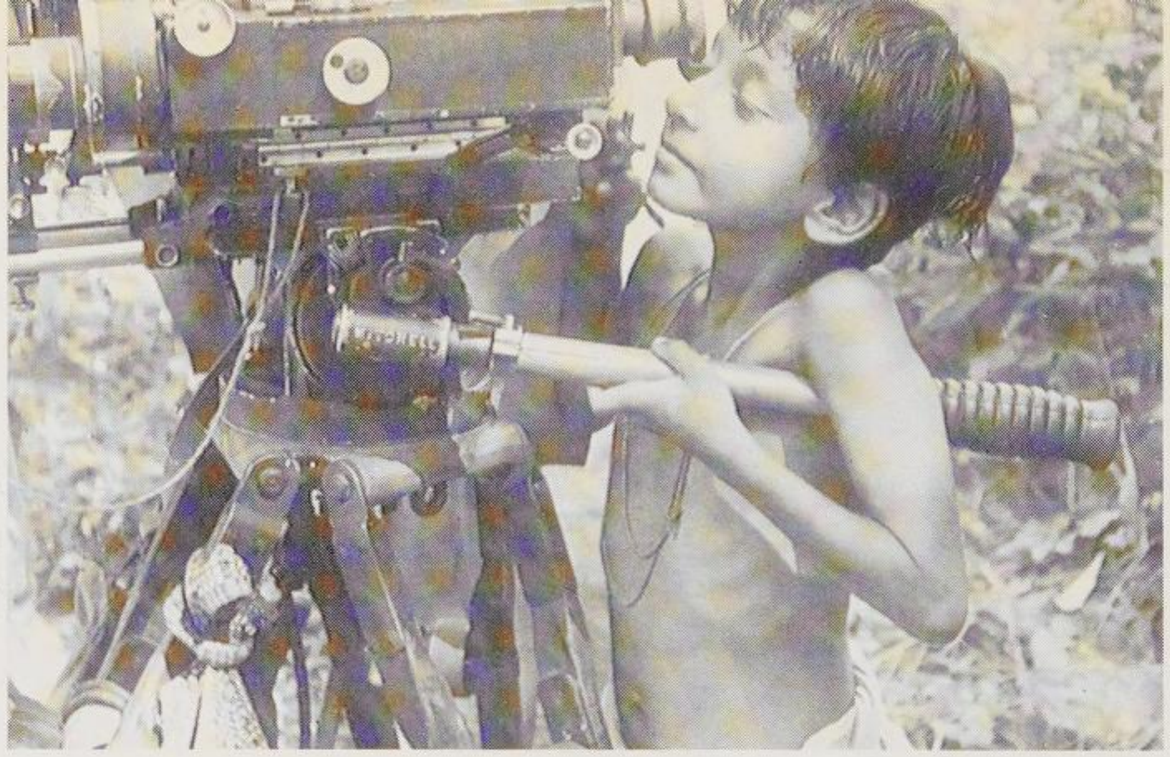
Shooting with Chunibala Devi as Indir in the bamboo grove (Above Left), with Subir as Apu (Above Right), and with the children at the peepshow.







CLOCKWISE : Mitra with his camera; checking with Karuna Banerjee; shooting in progress; Ray instructing Subir Banerjee as Apu.



In between the shots : Clockwise : Uma and Karuna Banerjee; Subir; Uma by herself; Chunibala and Uma.

In between the shots : CLOCKWISE : Uma and Subir; setting up for a shot; Ray instructing Chunibala as Indir for the death scene; Mitra with the 'schoolboys'. Photographs taken by Bansi Chandragupta except his own. Courtesy : Sandip Ray.

A REVENUE ACCOUNT

Pather Pānchāli

[From 26th August to 13th September 1955 = 19 days]

Gross sales proceeds for 19 days	...	Rs.	3,80,000/-
Less 2% to Govt. of India Newsreel commission	...	Rs.	760/-
		Rs.	3,79,240/-
Less 50% to show houses	...	Rs.	1,89,620/-
		Rs.	1,89,620/-
Less $12\frac{1}{2}$% to distributors	...	Rs.	23,702/8/-
Net profit to the Govt of W. Bengal	...	Rs.	1,65,917/8/-

Rupees One lakh sixty-five thousand nine hundred seventeen and annas eight only.

SATYAJIT RAY
his films

Pather Panchali

1 One of the greatest films of the world

We need not go for all those apologetics this time — 'perhaps', 'but', 'if', 'maybe', and so on — and for once we can clearly and without a hint of hesitation proclaim to the world that our country is capable of producing films reaching to heights not in quantity alone, but in quality too — a film that deserves to be considered as one of the greatest works in the entire history of world cinema. We can boast of that distinction after having seen *Pather Panchali*. *Pather Panchali* is a masterwork by the novelist Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay. But with the skill that Satyajit Ray has brought to bear both on his scriptwriting and direction, he has produced something so original that one cannot recall any film, indigenous or foreign, at least of those seen in this country, comparable to it. If there is anyone here who has doubts on this question, after having seen the film, there will be reason to suspect that either he is embarrassed to acknowledge his country's greatness in any field, or that he is the worst kind of a snob, or simply jealous. There has never been such an exhilarating experience in the nearly twenty-five years of watching some thousands of films, foreign and Indian alike. Never have I felt such an intense urge to plaster a film all over with attributives. We have a chance at last to shout from the housetops to the world that the Indian cinema has the capacity to claim pride of place in the world for complete artistry. And one is struck dumb with wonder when one thinks on how exactly it was made.

Scriptwriter and director Satyajit Ray was not associated with filmmaking in any way before he came to make this film; the cinematographer Subrata Mitra had been an assistant on the film *The River*; art director Bansi Chandragupta had not had much to do with films. These three have made the film, with equipment and accessories that would have been discarded elsewhere, and that too only too inadequate. But what they have produced like wizards with these would be hard to accomplish with the best equipment available in the world. The exemplary patience, dedication and endurance with which they have gone about in the making of this film, spending day after day, month after month, brooding on the best that is possible, looking for it, locating it, and then weaving them all into scenes organized to a rhythm, and then capturing them through the camera, is a history by itself. They have proved once for all that sensitive artists and thinking human beings are capable of creating faultless masterworks with the most worthless instruments, by virtue of dedication alone. The touch of life that Satyajit Ray, as the leader of the activist-makers of the group that made the film, brought to every single department of the making, reveals everything to the eye in a new light. There has never been such an example of every part of the making allowing full freedom to the one who conducts it to develop and project his personality and yet become an inseparable part of the collectivity. One can see the distinctively individual contributions, and yet what emerges ultimately is a wholeness of supreme beauty. Bhupendra Ghosh and Satyen Chattopadhyay have recorded or mixed sound for many films in the past, but the way the director has used their work has given the excellence of their work a new dimension. There have been such a rich range of the use of music in cinema, but in the musical orchestration of this film, just as the originality of Ravi Shankar's musical genius is only too evident, so is there a method charted out by director Satyajit Ray for the use of music in a film in such a manner that it serves the needs of the narrative and becomes part of the distinctive dignity of the work. It is the art of direction that establishes once for all that a film can bring into view the distinctive roles of every single element of its technology, and yet draw all of them together to give the whole a uniqueness that would make the viewer feel like crying out ever so often, 'It's so wonderful!'

The originality of *Pather Panchali* is so striking that the businessman in cinema will be driven to wonder as to what kind of emotional impact it would come to have on people. No commercial distributor was ready to advance money to help the makers complete the film, because it had no songs or dances or cheap funs and games. The activist-makers and the artistes were almost all new people, and the few oldtimers who were in it had little box-office worth. Yet the director Satyajit Ray was not prepared to compromise his artistic integrity to raise the necessary funds. It is in this context that one

has to pay credit to the Government of West Bengal and particularly Chief Minister Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy for their assistance. By offering financial support to the making of a film, Dr Roy did something that no state in India had ever done. If this assistance had not come its way, the world of cinema would have had to go without a masterpiece. The director Satyajit Ray has not only done credit to this act of State benevolence, but has also brought to the Government of West Bengal credit for being at the forefront of State patronage of the arts. Throughout the film there are clear signs of originality in every aspect. One will never exhaust recalling all those bits of excellence over such a range with such overwhelming impact. The human appeal of the story has been presented in such simplicity and with such ease that it would overpower the mind of every viewer. There is not a single segment anywhere in the film that is dispensable or worthless, or incapable of raising a resonance in the heart. It does not have a moment without a thrill of its own. A film that calls forth such total admiration seems to be a wonder.

It would be a difficult and daring job to capture a large novel like *Pather Panchali* within the confines of a film of the standard length. Furthermore, *Pather Panchali* is a novel that revels in the description of nature and human character. A rich range of descriptions of the charms of nature constitute the core of the work. It goes without saying that there is no way one can hope to bring within the scope of a film the entirety of this enormous novel. Satyajit Ray has naturally not attempted to do it either. Nonetheless one of the outstanding achievements of Satyajit Ray lies in the fact that the script has not deviated in the least from the original novel. One finds no excuse to crib once one has seen how carefully the essential moods and feelings have been picked out from the novel and presented so precisely. Anyway one has to recognize the film as an independent original work. For though based on the text, the cinematic transformation shows so many clear signs of original creativity that it has come to claim its right to independent evaluation. The narrative as such is not much. Harihar is an impoverished Brahman. At the beginning of the story, his wife Sarbajaya, his daughter Durga, and an old cousin Indir Thakrun constitute the rest of the family. Durga, the naughty little girl, steals fruits from the orchard next door, and Sarbajaya has to bear the brunt of the neighbours' insults. Sarbajaya takes it out on Indir Thakrun, with whom Durga shares a warm attachment. With Harihar without a job for a while, and hence compelled to run the household on a pittance, Sarbajaya has grown bitter and irritable. Reacting to her temper, Indir Thakrun would get into a rage at times, gather her earthly possessions of a tattered mat and a quilt and a brass mug together and leave the house muttering bitterly to herself. Harihar takes time out to write plays for the jatra [a travelling theatre-in-the round form popular all over eastern India], and nurtures the hope that some day his plays will be a runaway success, and they would not be poor any more. This is the setting in which Apu is born, with dreamy, questing eyes. Harihar gets a job. Indir Thakrun comes back. Days pass. Apu grows up. He scampers about with his sister. Their aunt next door cannot stand them because they are poor. Brother and sister go to sleep, to the drone of Indir Thakrun telling her fairy tales. Apu is admitted to the village primary school. One day, playing hide and seek with his sister, Apu goes beyond the *kaash* groves, and has his first sight of a train, the thrill of a new experience bursting upon their life. The household faces trouble again, when Harihar's wages are blocked for a number of months. Harihar goes away to Bishnupur, in search of a job, and there is no news of him for four months. Indir Thakrun had left house meanwhile; when she returns one afternoon, and staggers her way to the porch, obviously utterly drained out, and pleads for a glass of water, an embittered Sarbajaya, having her lunch, coldly asks her to draw it from the pitcher herself. Indir Thakrun comes up to the pitcher and watches Sarbajaya eating. She does not drink the water. She leaves the house at once with her humble belongings. On their way back home after a day's romp, Durga and Apu discover their aunt sitting under the tree before their house, all in a bundle, her head nesting on her knees raised to the chin. Getting no response when they call out to her, they touch her, and at their touch the body topples and rolls over on the ground, lifeless, striking the children with awe. The monsoon rains provide the children an occasion to get thoroughly drenched. But Durga has a bout of fever, which is diagnosed as pneumonia by a doctor called in by a friendly neighbour and relation. Durga dies on a night of a strong wind blowing through a heavy downpour. Harihar returns a few days later, with money and gifts. When he hands over to Sarbajaya the sari he has brought for Durga, Sarbajaya breaks into a gush of tears held back for too long. Soon after Harihar leaves for Banaras, with his wife and son.

There is nothing quite excitingly dramatic in the narrative. But what it has is a design that brings a whole setting to life to stir the viewer's emotions. A whole host of details, insignificant in themselves, go to the making of every dramatic climax. There is nothing

in the least unreal or false about all the elements that go into this design. They go to build up a splendid chronicle of a life lived through incessant daily struggle against plight and poverty. It is the story of Durga and Apu, born in the midst of the direst poverty. For all practical purposes, it is nature that nurtures them, with Indir Thakrun, the old aunt, as a source of comfort. They experience the inveterate hatred of the aunt who is a neighbour, only because they are poor. The aunt's children are very much like them otherwise, and would love to have their company and play with them, but their mother sternly holds them back. They notice how while they live in semi-starvation, it is only a single neighbour and aunt, who concerns herself with them, but the rest of the larger family remain totally indifferent to their plight. And yet when the young girl dies, and the family opts to leave for Banaras, it is the same neighbours who turn up to advise them not to go! The village schoolteacher, stick in hand to scare his little pupils, and simultaneously the grocer too, receives Chakraborty [one of the village elders] who picks up a pinch of oil for his hair and as a deal promises to exempt the schoolteacher-grocer from the obligation of contributing to the common puja fund. The cruelty that Sarbajaya inflicts with a vengeance on her cousin-in-law, left helpless with no means of her own, growing out of her own helplessness as she struggles desperately to bring her own children up, gives a rare insight into the mysteries of the human mind. A drop of a tear in Durga's eye as she watches her friend decked up for her wedding offers a poignant view of a village girl's hopes and dreams. Trifles in themselves, all these episodes are loaded with matters of the heart. There is nothing here that leaves the mind unscathed.

In the larger design, there are several things to notice for themselves. The viewer's mouth waters as he watches Durga, who has stolen tamarinds, make Apu go and steal oil to make a pickle of them, put the concoction into her mouth with relish, and then put Apu's share into his mouth. There are several of these extremely ordinary, unpretentious and everyday happenings that set the viewer's memories and feelings throbbing to them. The viewer identifies with Apu and Durga, when while playing among the *kaash* groves, they suddenly stop at the telegraph pole, and put their ears to it to hear the rumbling from within it, and then break into a mad run at the sound of the train's whistle. One senses a profound calm settling on the mind as one watches all those common and simple events — as the children follow the candy man, dancing along to the rhythm of the bells on the yoke bearing the bowls of sweets; or the fight that breaks out at the picnic over someone having forgotten to bring the salt, and the picnic itself coming to the verge of disaster; or the pomp and splendour of the band at the wedding of the neighbour aunt's daughter; or the more tense scene at Apu's birth; or the sense of pathos that gathers around Indir Thakrun leaving the house in a temper and coming back again and again. The mind gets a jolt at the sight of Indir Thakrun dead, with her head propped up on her knees rolling over on the ground at Durga's touch. There has never been a death scene like this in cinema. It strikes all the more harshly because the old Indir Thakrun has been so gentle and so harmless, having spent her last days telling the children fairy tales to send them to sleep, and then leaning against the wall to sing to herself, 'O Lord Hari, it's the evening of life,' pleading with God for her own passage to the life beyond, raising a weight to bear upon the mind. There is the inescapable presence of Apu's curious eyes all through the film, as he watches the battle scenes with swords on the jatra stage, and again when he watches the old aunt's death. There is a great dramatic moment when some time after Durga's death, in the midst of their preparations to go to Banaras, in the course of packing up his belongings, Apu discovers in a shelf high up a bead garland stolen by her sister and kept hidden in the coconut shell that she used, to make and store her pickles in, and, with a stab of pain, throws it into the pond nearby. The garland belonged to one of the girls next door, and charged with stealing it, Durga had denied the allegation, but had been cruelly beaten by her mother nonetheless. All those memories surrounded the garland. The rain scenes in the film are incomparable in their grandeur, as the clouds overcast the sky in full view of the camera, and Apu and Durga run and run through the gathering storm, the frogs swim in the water at the hint of the oncoming showers; the baldheaded man, sitting with his fishing rod at the pond, receives on his bald pate the first raindrop; and then the water pours on the lotus leaves bending under their impact, and the sky itself seems to pour, with Durga in an exquisite scene, indulging herself in the shower of the downpour, her hair let loose and sprawling. And then, of course, the rain and storm of the night of Durga's death with the tattered cloth on the window wrenched from its moorings, the door pressed to come off its hinges, and a lonely Sarbajaya with the sick daughter in her lap, and Apu lying beside, taking the battering. The frenzy of nature framing Sarbajaya's face marked with terror and a desperate urge to save her daughter builds up to a tense dramatic situation, that in its panic and urgency

grips the viewer's mind with a stiflling awe the like of which has never struck the viewer before. The scene the next morning, with the standing water and the mud, the blown off roof, and the dead frog give the courtyard a look of utter desolation. And then the ultimate climax comes when Harihar returns after a long absence and hands over to Sarbajaya the sari he has bought for Durga. Sarbajaya's lament has a force of its own capable of bringing down all the resistance that a viewer can raise before it.

The different elements that go into the making of the setting are arranged in a manner that serves to generate a wonderful universal appeal for the rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, the people of this country and foreigners alike, and the minds of people from any class in any country of the world whatsoever. The style can be described as Neorealism, the style that came into being on the initiative of masters like De Sica and others in post-War Italy. But Satyajit Ray has left them far behind and touched a height that is yet to be approached by anyone else. In the way *Pather Panchali* captures a cruel and authentic reality in terms of a delicate poetic rhythm, the grace of art and the passionate pace of drama, it offers a fresh realization of the great scope of cinema. There is a wonderful balance throughout, with the actors and actresses chosen to match the looks of the characters they play. Once one has seen Subir Banerjee as Apu or Uma Dasgupta as Durga, there is no way one would imagine a different appearance, physiognomy, manner or gait for either of them. Chunibala Devi as Indir Thakrun is a veritable wonder. At nearly ninety, her eyes and nose and the rest of her face are lost in wrinkles, and yet what a compelling expression she draws out of herself! The performance of this actress, the oldest in the world, is a matchless achievement in acting for the whole world. Her death in the film and the manner of it draws further poignancy from that fact. Kanu Bandyopadhyay as Harihar represents the poor Brahman, who writes plays for the jatra, with his inexhaustible stock of hopes and dreams, with such authenticity and conviction both in appearance and performance that one cannot think of any other actor in that role. Karuna Bandyopadhyay's Sarbajaya has the same quality. As a wife, she can fulfil none of her desires, and yet she is not one to complain. As a mother, she cannot provide her children with the basic sustenance of a full meal, yet she would fight heroically to keep them living. She clings on to the pride and dignity of the family in the face of all odds. She would rather go out very early in the morning with the family utensils, mortgage them and bring rice in return than speak even to a benevolent neighbour about her dire plight. Karuna Bandyopadhyay's performance manifests that very essence of Indian womanhood, that silence in the face of crisis, holding back the desperate cry. There has rarely been a scene so charged with the poignancy of a repressed feeling bursting forth in esctasy as that in which Sarbajaya breaks into a rush of tears as she acknowledges her grief for the dead Durga, when Harihar appears with that gift of a sari. Even the lesser characters are all played with flawless authenticity. Tulsi Chakraborty playing the grocer cum teacher simultaneously at his grocer's shop reveals a fresh dimension in his acting. The wily look with which the candyman with bowls of sweets on his yoke attracts his little customers or his bobbing gait to the rhythm of his bells are difficult to forget. However trivial a character may be, every one of them presents an appearance that has the quality of inevitability.

Subrata Mitra's cinematography adds grace to the neorealistic mode adopted for the film. This is the first time he has shot a film, but in this first attempt he has demonstrated a mastery that matches the best cinematography. To his silent landscapes he brings a dramatic emotional eloquence. The film was shot in the village of Boral, not so far from Calcutta, with only a small portion shot in the artificial lighting of the studio. Most of the film is shot in exteriors, in the natural light of the village. That explains the touch of life that vibrates through every part of the work. Durga and Apu playing about in the bamboo groves, the wind rippling through the *kaash* grove, the candyman on the pondside, the frogs dancing in the water before the rain comes, the grasshoppers, flying among the *kalmi* stalks, the dead Indir Thakrun's brass mug dropping into the pond, the fly coming to rest on the dead body, the dog running in from the rain and shaking itself dry, the procession with the dead body coursing its way through dust paths, the raindrops on the lotus leaves preceding the grand view of the downpour —— every inch of the film is evidence of the sheer artistry of its camera work, with the unmistakable mark of originality. In terms of technique, the shots of the rain with Durga drenching herself and the night of Durga's death will be remembered for ever as high points of achievement. Like the camera work, sound too is made to serve a special role, in the sound along the rails as the train approaches, the rumbling within the telegraph pole, the roar of the storm, the hissing through the *kaash* groves. In the recording and mixing of sound Bhupen Ghosh and Satyen Chattopadhyay have added new feathers to their track

record. The art direction and music too make signal contribution. There is no trace of artifice anywhere in Bansi Chandragupta's art direction, be it in Harihar's household, or in the schoolteacher's grocery or at the wedding, the meticulous setting articulating the reality in every scene. Similarly there is nothing artificial about the musical background orchestrated by Ravi Shankar, who uses exclusively Indian instruments playing rural and folk tunes, adding brilliantly to the drama of the narrative; using music at another level to convey the violence of nature, achieving consummate success in the blending of different sounds from different instruments. Dulal Dutta's editing of the film deserves acclaim.

One can go on singing paeans of praise to *Pather Panchali* for there has never been a film with such exceptional qualities in every one of its several features. There has never been a film with such power to keep its viewers riveted to it all along. Just as one need not point to the details of the natural glory of a garden to make one feel it, so the qualities of *Pather Panchali* cast their spell on the viewer without any laboured interpretation whatsoever.

PANKAJ DUTTA
Desh (in Bengali, Calcutta) 1955
Translated by Samik Bandyopadhyay

2

Let it be said quite clearly, and right at the outset, that this is no ordinary film we are reviewing. The caution is necessary, because so extravagant is the use of superlatives in film writing in general that words, adjectives in particular, have had their full meaning corroded away, as if by inflation. Every word in this review is to be taken at its full value.

This is the first Indian film which is Indian in every inch. We emphasize this aspect not because it has no universal appeal; it has, and that because it is truly Indian; but because this film is a truer picture of life in an Indian village than any we have seen. The story is well known; it relates to a Bengal village which is dying out—the sort of village we have all seen and turned away from. It is to such a spot that the young director, Satyajit Ray, has taken his camera, his seeing eye, his feeling heart, and his very capable hands. The result is a film of exquisite beauty, and it is, in the fullest sense of the term, a work of art—a thing we would not say about many films made anywhere.

As has been said once before in this column, it is not in drama that the Bengali film will ever come near its foreign competitors. Life in this part of the world is harsh, painful—but rarely violent. It is the emotions which are occasionally, and only occasionally, violent. What is more in tune with the plastic soil of Bengal is the poetic quality of our nature, human and physical. It is this poetic quality of our landscape, mental and physical, which has been caught triumphantly by Director Ray. The characters in the film—Indir Thakrun, Apu, Durga, Sarbajaya and others—are all portrayed beautifully, and Durga is just superb—and having said that, we will go on to add that never is the human element allowed to dominate the film. That would indeed have been false, for in life too the characters are dominated by nature. They are, oftener than not, objects rather than subjects. But all that is sociology.

Director Ray's approach is poetic and artistic. Some of the compositions, that quivering lotus in the pond on the eve of the rains, for instance, are like painting. The conception of the entire reel covering the onset of the rains in a Bengal village is poetic, and anyone who has known how the rains change the face of the whole countryside will re-live that unforgettable experience in this film. A dying Bengali village has never before come to life as it has done in this unique, yes unique, creation. *Pather Panchali* is a thing of beauty from beginning to end, and let us put it quite bluntly that if for any reason this film should not receive the universal acclamation it deserves (in terms of critical praise and in those of box office returns), we will have forfeited our right to ask for a good film again.

Some misconceptions remain to be removed. The film is sponsored by the Government of West Bengal. But the latter, very wisely, refrains from interfering with the film. There is no propaganda, except what there is in the theme. The propaganda is such that it is only a dead heart which will not, after seeing this film, want to do something for India's villages. But let it be clearly understood that the Government has not imposed any of its propaganda stuff on the film which is as its director conceived it.

Secondly, let no one fall into the error of thinking that *Pather Panchali* is intended for long-haired, unwashed, coffee-drinking intellectuals who form cinema societies and do not pay the monthly subscription in time. This is a people's film, if ever there has been one. There are certainly scenes and suggestions which can be appreciated the more by those who have some knowledge of film technique—those who have read Eisenstein and seen Flaherty—but

there is nothing at all which cannot be enjoyed by exactly those people whose life the film deals with. 'Deal with', did we say? That is a sordid phrase. The film is a piece of poetry, dedicated to the deathless spirit of Bengal, and it is a poem which can be heard and recited by every Bengali. And, being Bengali, it is bound to conquer the rest of India and the whole world. This film, let us aver, marks the Indian film's coming of age. We salute Satyajit Ray and all his comrades who have produced this superb film. Yes, superb.

D. R. M.
[Niranjan Majumdar]
Hindusthan Standard, Calcutta
2 September 1955

3

When Renoir made *The River* in Bengal, Ray was able to follow the shooting closely. That he learned much from this experience is obvious, yet he has made a film that is purely and deeply his own.

'To admire on principle,' Coleridge observed, 'is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.' Ray's admiration of Renoir is of this kind. Turning back indeed in an article which he contributed to *Sequence* in 1950 ('Renoir in Calcutta') I find him writing : 'To Renoir there is nothing more important in a film than the emotional integrity of the emotions it depicts, Technique is useful and necessary in so far as it contributes towards this integrity. Beyond that it is generally intrusive and exhibitionist.' And this is the quality of Ray's own film. Humbly, patiently, his camera reaches forward into life, exploring and exposing, with reverence and wonder.

Pather Panchali is adapted from a well known Bengali novel (literally the title means 'Song of the Little Road'), but the translation into terms of cinema is complete. It is the story of a poor family living in a hopeless, patched-up hovel, in a small village. The father is a clerk, who dreams ineptly of being a poet; he is badly paid and sometimes not paid at all. His wife has to make do from day to day with rice and a fruit and meat if they are lucky. There are two children, a girl and a boy, and an incredibly wizened capricious old lady whom they know as 'Auntie'. The lives of these people is the story of the film : there is no tight dramatic construction or conventional plot. The tension is poetic rather than dramatic, created by the artist's intimate contact with his material, physical, as well as emotional. To make *Pather Panchali* Ray must have lived as closely with his characters as Flaherty had to live with his Polynesians, when he made *Moana*.

Everything is significant : small joys, bitterness and tragedies intermingled with the hard routine of every day. The mother prepares a meal, and the children play. Around the wretched house are shady woodland paths, stretches of water, fields of tall feathered grass. The children have no lack of delights and mysteries: the sweet-seller passing down the track, calling his wares; an express train charging powerfully across the plain; a performance by a troupe of strolling players. The film's rhythm is slow, absorbed, reflecting the rhythm of simple lives. There are too many mouths to feed, and the old lady, grown irritating beyond endurance, is turned away by the mother. She goes off to die alone in the forest—*Tobacco Road* shorn of its grotesque comedy. Insect life stirs the surface of the placid lake; the leaves of the water-lilies flap in the rising wind; the rains begin. The little girl catches cold and becomes ill: rain beats into the hut, the threadbare hangings collapse, and there is nothing to protect the feverish little body. She dies. In the end the rest of the family move away to the city. A snake glides slowly into the deserted home; father, mother and son sit patiently in their wagon. With this sad humanistic affirmation, resisting the rhetoric of a long shot, tenaciously holding his people's faces, Ray ends his film.

Pather Panchali is a beautiful picture, completely fresh and personal, which required great courage and perseverance to make. (Shooting was brought to a halt for a considerable period because money ran out.) It is to compliment Ray, not to deny his originality, that I mention names like Renoir and Flaherty. And another fertilizing influence has surely been the neorealism of De Sica, Zavattini and Rossellini, with its equal rejection of dramatic conventions, and its passionate concern with the lives of the underprivileged.

LINDSAY ANDERSON
Sight and Sound, London 1955

Aparajito

1

The air is cool. The sky is flecked. It is morning. A fat priest calls pigeons to breakfast. There is a mild flutter of wings. Aren't these rather cosy perches for the birds, these rakish bamboo and straw sun-shades? We see the long, long flights of steps to the river. We sense it is Ganga. We guess these are the ghats of Banaras. Each image fixes itself in our mind—the birds on wing, the rapt and bizarre faces of the *pujaris* in the temple. The whole scene shapes itself into a poem. All the noises compose themselves into a symphony. Don't ask if it is real Banaras. I have never been there. But it is pure cinema—as pure and as real as it can be. It is Satyajit Ray's Banaras.

Mr Ray is a fanatic. He sticks to the idea and does not lower it an inch. He knows the precise interplay of light and shade and the exact counterpoint of the visual and the aural image which will make the moment live. But he is no highbrow and he is no obstructionist. He does not merely see. He lives what he sees. From the moment we meet Apu's father at the ghats—we, too, are involved in the life of his small family.

The story by itself is banal through and through. There is no inner conflict. There is no drama. But the bare bones of the story give no clue to the intensities of *Aparajito*. We can never get out of our mind the dreariness of the life in the sooty, crooked house where the family lives. We will always hear the drip, drip of the miserable tap and the screech of the broom against the stone floor. We will always hear the last gasps of Apu's father as he lies dying. We will always remember the dumb sorrow of the boy in the face of death. Who said the poor die like rats?

Mr Ray transfigures poverty. He doesn't sentimentalize it. Very tenderly he tells us, 'this is how men live,' and 'this is how they die.' It may not be tragic. But it is very, very sad. It does not make us cry. But it does make us think of death and of the loneliness of man. As Apu's father lies ill, the street outside is ablaze with Diwali fireworks and full of the happy shrieks of children. This enhances the sense of loneliness of the mother and the child. Apu's father dies and the image of the dying face is followed in a magnificent sequence with the image of pigeons in flight and the dark, frenzied faces of the temple priests at prayer. It adds to our sense of desolation.

But the ambivalence of life asserts itself. The point counterpoint of the images puts every episode in focus. The mother takes up a job, and Apu is again free to play. In a playful sequence we see him feed a group of temple monkeys. Life goes on in spite of death. The joys and sorrows of life are so mixed up. *Aparajito* renders this homespun philosophy in unforgettable images.

The images have the quality of intense moments of vision. They don't argue. They convince us by their silence. Mr Ray is stingy to a fault. He does not waste an image or a word. The old man, a zamindar every inch, hardly speaks. He doesn't have to. We know he is bored. We know that his bald head needs a gentle massage. Apu's mother hardly speaks in the dingy tenement room she has been given in the zamindar's house. She doesn't have to. The loud sizzle of the brinjals in the frying pan tells us all that needs to be told. That noise—we can almost smell the mustard oil—is poverty itself. We can't get it out of our head. Apu's mother at last agrees to send the boy to Calcutta. But she feels too alone. She doesn't have to say so. Her feeble smile is dense with sorrow.

It can perhaps be argued that *Pather Panchali* has an emotional cohesion—that it hangs together better than *Aparajito*. But any such reasoning is wholly out of place. *Pather Panchali* may have a certain idyllic unity. But what *Aparajito* lacks in this superficial unity it gains in the richer rhythm of the contrasts between the tempos of life in Banaras, in the village and in Calcutta. Perhaps it is not as lyrical as *Pather Panchali*, but that does not make it less poetic—for poetry depends not on a mood but on the intensity of vision. The poery of *Aparajito* remains. There is no rhetoric. The irony is always gentle. The satire is never too harsh. It may lack the popular appeal of *Pather Panchali*—but that does not make it any the less significant. The greater complexity of its rhythm—and its point counter point—in fact makes it more meaningful. Mr Ray still believes in the primacy of the visual image. That is as it should be, for all said and done, the cinema speaks primarily to our eye. But in *Aparajito* he has made a richer use of sound. It is the use Mr Ray makes of the everyday

noises of life in the city and in the village (in addition to Ravi Shankar's music score) that invests the sound track of *Aparajito* with a new quality.

The music of *Aparajito* is no opium. It doesn't induce sweet dreams. It does not fabricate an atmosphere or create a mood. Instead, it brings out the full tenderness or poignancy of the moment. But few want to look at events so clearly. It is painful. Few have the heart to see even a sunflower as Van Gogh saw it. Our minds are clogged with clichés and with stock images. *Aparajito* does not speak in clichés. It may have to wait for some time before people will listen to it.

SHAMLAL
The Times of India, Mumbai 1955

2

Like most sequels, *Aparajito* is inferior to *Pather Panchali*, that moving quasi-documentary about the subhuman daily round in a Bengal village of an impoverished Brahmin family which the National Board of Review called 1958's best foreign film.

Panchali ended, it will be remembered, with the ineffectual lay priest, Harihar, preparing to take his family to Benaras. *Aparajito* begins after they have arrived there.

The early part of *Aparajito* is the most interesting, or, at least, so I thought. We are shown bits and pieces of Benaras life — the laundering and bathing along the Ganges shore; the story-telling and scripture reading conducted on those broad stairways that line the sacred river; the domestic accoutrements and arrangements in the tenements in the ancient alleys inland.

All of which is cinema at its best, for it is a revelation, with considerable art, of facets of human existence that could be brought into our ken in no other way. I grant that the story-line, on which these vignettes are strung, is naive. But it serves its purpose: it humanizes what otherwise would be arid documentation.

The story-line—which is said to have been adapted from a novel by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay—is contrived as well as naive. Harihar is soon taken sick and dies; his son wins a scholarship to a university in Calcutta; his widowed mother pines for him, sickens and dies; and the fadeout is the boy going down the road to the station from which the train will take him to Calcutta and his future (yes, there is another sequel that will show what happened to him).

The version of *Aparajito* that will be shown in the US has been considerably cut—or so I have been told. The cuts, I fancy, were details of Benaras life of which I, for one, could not have too many. *Aparajito* however has been cut much more intelligently than *Panchali* was, and the subtitles of *Aparajito* are also more intelligent.

Karuna Banerji, who plays the mother, is seen to even greater advantage in *Aparajito* than in *Panchali*. She is a flawless actress who can project interior feelings with that universality which surmounts language barriers and explicates parochial customs. She is the *sine qua non* of *Aparajito*, just as she was of *Panchali*.

That is not said to disparage the very great directorial ability of Satyajit Ray (who also wrote the script). The naturalism in both *Panchali* and *Aparajito* is successful only because Ray knows how to make ordinary situations and incidents effective visually. He is greatly aided in this by the skilful black-and-white photography of Subrata Mitra. And he is also helped by the Indian music composed and played by Ravi Shankar.

HENRY HART
Films in Review, New York 1959

Jalsaghar

Though theme plays or first-line last-line plays are now being played as a new kind of impromptu theatre in the West, in India the *Mirasis* have been entertaining audiences for centuries past—no filmmaker, either in the West or East, has used this innovation in cinema till Satyajit Ray came out with *Jalsaghar*. Between the opening shot of a zamindar who has almost lost the battle, and the closing shot—he is getting ready to march to the inevitable goal,—Ray has woven a tragic drama about the sunny days of a zamindar giving way to a life of inactivity; his love for his child, music, and wine, and his fatelike black ego pushing him to his doom.

Seldom has the technique of montage, based on the principle of two independent shots flashing, in succession, past your retina, created a mood, an idea or an emotion so powerfully as in *Jalsaghar*. One out of numerous examples is when the Ustad is singing a raga inside the Jalsaghar and outside (intercut) the white streaks of lightning flit across the black, clouded dark sky.

Seldom is the technique of montage as conscious as in this film. In the opening sequence the zamindar, seated on a chair, looks straight at you, beyond you, far off into the void perhaps. His servant enters with a hookah, hands his *Hujoor* the *nar* and leaves. The zamindar puffs at it, gets up on hearing the faint strains of a Shehnai coming from afar. 'What month is this?' asks the zamindar of his servant.

Ray has also used sound—in the beginning the *tāns* of the Shehnai and towards the end the neighing of the horse—to associate thoughts, and thus a flashback, to unfold the drama. Sound has also been used here as a springboard for motivation. No doubt the subject did help Ray to bring to the general mass the deep and melodious music and rich dance of his country, but had he not instilled in the viewer the theme of his subject, this very step might have turned the tables on him. Ray wins his battle within the first five minutes with the very first few shots.

Perhaps the zamindar's small world—which in turn lends a compactness to his life and hence the film—lent itself into a rounded characterization, but long after the film is over you feel as if you have been with the zamindar for a long, long time. Chhabi Biswas's restrained, steady and studied performance takes his and Ray's film to great heights.

Though the film is episodic—and what episodes!—it gives a feeling of a well-knit and well-edited screenplay. But I do wish Ray had cut out the clichés—the model ship falling on the side-board and a storm raging outside, or the struggling of the cockroach in the wine.

NITIN SETHI
Montage, Mumbai, July 1966

Apur Sansar

Though it is perhaps inevitable that one looks upon *Apur Sansar* as the final culmination of the Trilogy, to do the film proper justice, it is essential to consider it as an independent effort. In a sense, Apu is of all Ray's characters, the one in whom the spectator has the most personal interest. For, having in a sense been with him from carefree childhood (despite its tragic eventualities), through uncertain adolescence, here at last is the final evolution. And one leaves him, at the end, with the circle complete — back to childhood, with the final relationship between him and his son a fascinating insinuation.

This 'world' of Apu is a limited, circumscribed one, yet one of essentially deeply felt emotions. Despite the struggle, the squalid, utterly unromanticized but real background against which Apu lives and moves, he carries within himself a world of poetry and an unconscious depth of human understanding — and this is conveyed, inevitably, to the spectator. Apu manages to create a degree of involvement and empathy for his microcosm that no other character of Ray's (except perhaps Charulata of the even more claustrophobic world) manages to create. For real as many of Ray's characters are there is often by the time the spectator gets to them, an air of detached remoteness that makes them interesting people, rather than human beings with whom one feels any sense of voluntary cathartic involvement.

It has been claimed here, as elsewhere, that Ray has not made the most of his moment of decision. Perhaps the climax of the film is too quiet? But Apu is not a flamboyant character, and his reaction seems, in the nature of things, inevitable. Nothing really sensational happens to him — an air of failure, if not malignity, seems to haunt him. Apu, with his intensity of emotional involvement, temperamentally needs a focal point of interest in his life. He seems to move from one emotional vacuum to the next, with almost frightening inevitability. When by sheer chance Aparna comes into his life, and at last there is an element of happiness, it seems as if the polarization of

his 'world' has redressed the balance of misery. When she dies, it is inevitable that his 'world' collapses about him, and he is unable to bestir himself in a decisive manner. His rejection of the familiar universe might seem a signal irresponsibility for the practical man of the world today — but it is also quite in keeping with the standard of values and the temperament assigned to Apu in the film. He is not, it should be remembered, the great brawny 'he–man' of the conventional cinema, nor does he subscribe to 'stiff upper lip' silent suffering. He is much nearer the average human being, who rejects—perhaps out of sheer inability to do anything more concrete—the reality to which he is accustomed.

Apur Sansar was the sort of film that could, so easily, have degenerated, almost unconsciously, into the banal. But it does not. Apu, in any case, seems to be at the losing end of things with such consistency, that he reminds one fleetingly of the Marcel Carné characters, doomed to failure—but without the intensely over-wrought and artistically contrived air of glossy pessimism, and dogged Fate that enfolds the Carné hero. *Apur Sansar* has, rather, a wistful, nostalgic air of quiet tragedy.

The film has obvious shortcomings—not the least of which is the fact that the major actor has at crucial moments been unable to live up to Ray's obvious intention (though the performance in its entirety is one of Soumitra Chatterjee's more sensitive). But somehow, in the final analysis, these remain trivialities rather than deficiencies of any great significance. For this last Apu remains a figure of fascinating nuances and justifiable human irresolution—and for me, at least, the most genuinely moving and unforgettable of Ray's major adult characters.

KOBITA SARKAR
Montage, Mumbai, July 1966

Devi

1 Girl into Goddess

When Satyajit Ray made *The Goddess* (Academy Cinema Club), it was banned for export because the Indian Government thought that its candour about the power of superstition in India might harm their country's name abroad. The man who lifted the ban was Nehru himself.

It isn't surprising that people tried to smother the picture because it is very open about the misery that can be caused by the pious, and there is nothing that arouses more ferocious protectiveness than piety. It also wouldn't really have been surprising if some people had been deterred from making the film at all, for the different reason that it is about a subject that might well be impossible for non-Indians to grasp.

The Goddess is worlds away from Ray's 'Apu' trilogy; it isn't about a poor man with problems fundamental to us all, it is about a rich, high-caste family caught in a situation that is absolute to Hinduism, which is one of the hardest of all religions for outsiders to follow. In a novel this would have worried no one. The novelist has a long-established right to explore the singular. But there is a heavy subconscious obligation on filmmakers to do the opposite, to universalize and to point out the typical, and it is a wonderful triumph of art that *The Goddess* so successfully declines to do it.

This assumption that it is best to reflect our common characteristics and ignore our differences is sometimes a brake on the cinema and not really very relevant to art. Just because a film is going to be seen by millions of people, there is no reason why it should necessarily be about a type of person who exists in millions too. It is only on the lower rungs of the business that this makes sense, and then only commercially, to the extent that if a piece of work is mediocre it is much more bearable if it is about something close to your own life. Men who have been in the Army are often prepared to sit through bad war films that bore the pants off the generation born after 1945, just as Englishmen who spend their days in City offices and board-rooms seem to be fascinated in the evening by the sight of themselves on the stage in business thrillers like *Difference of Opinion.*

The rules of art are something else. So the life in *The Goddess* is

made to seem intimately familiar even though there is hardly an aspect of it that isn't in fact remote from an English person's experience. For instance, the film embodies a strength of family feeling that we seem to have lost in England, even in working-class communities, and a gentleness towards the aged that I don't believe we have ever had.

The heroine, who is seventeen years old, has a shyness with her husband that is without the sense of threat that generally underlies English reserve, and there is no analogy that I can think of anywhere in Western culture to her father-in-law's religious love for her which is enough to convert his gratitude for her attention into a sudden calamitous conviction that she is an incarnation of a maternal goddess called Devi.

In India it often seems as if domestic life is seen as an imitation of divine virtues. The way Indian women carry water or serve their families with food is imbued with something very different from the spirit of giving a meal man-appeal or opening the fish-fingers. There are two sequences in *The Goddess* that carry identical charges of feeling, one where the girl is carrying out Hindu rituals at the family shrine and another where she is tending her father-in-law; it isn't surprising that, to a deeply religious old man who has lately lost his own wife, the sacred and the domestic should therefore suddenly become confused in a vision of the girl as Devi that he declares to be the clearest he has ever had.

What makes the situation tragic is that the girl is too submissive to do anything but accept other people's views of her, and her father-in-law's view turns out to conflict fatally with her husband's. When the old man has his vision her first reaction is one of horror. He kisses the ground in front of her feet, and her toes curl up instantly like the reflex of a dying bird. But her more sensible husband is away for the moment, and while he is gone it would be unlike her not to fall in with what the head of the family wants. The servants start drawing aside from her in awe, and her nephew grows awkward. The only dissenter in the reverential household is the wife of her drunken brother-in-law, a fast-spoken rationalist who says irritably that the whole thing makes her sick.

Trying to please

By the time her appalled husband returns, he finds her doing her best to preside as a goddess and perform miracles for the villagers who are traipsing for miles to see her, in pitiful queues burdened with sick children. She adores her husband as much as she reveres her father-in-law, but the effort to please them both splits her psyche in two like a tomahawk going through a skull.

The three men in the film—the feminine old patriarch, the plump, sottish brother-in-law and the husband—have a subtle likeness that seems to be a matter not only of family but also of class and history, a mixture of fineness and self-indulgence that is differently balanced in each of them but runs through all three. The actress who plays the heroine was the wife in *The World of Apu*, Sharmila Tagore, and she is unforgettable.

Visually, I think this is the most beautiful film that Ray has made. It is much more formal than the others, composed in stiff patterns and brilliant black and white that makes jewels and watch-chains stand out like starched lace in the dark. It seems marvellous that he should have been able to register such sweetness of spirit in a film without allowing a trace of softness, and looks so harshly at the destructive effects of superstition without ever mocking the roots of it. It is the achievement of an integrity as clear as a piece of glass.

PENELOPE GILIATT
New Yorker, New York 1963

2

The Apu Trilogy has been widely acclaimed as masterpiece, which indeed it is, though I would guess that in the years since its release fewer Americans have seen it than have seen *David and Lisa* in any *week* since its release. Fewer have seen Satyajit Ray's new film *Devi*, than have seen *David and Lisa* in any *night* since its release. Ingmar Bergman, who was also a slow starter with American audiences, had definitely caught on ; why not Ray?

Bergman is sensual and erotic, he provides 'stark' beauty and exposed nerves and conventional dramatic conflicts and a theme that passes for contemporary — the coldness of the intellectual. Husbands fail their wives and drive then crazy because they don't understand them and all that. (Really, it's not people who don't understand us who drive us nuts — it's when those who shouldn't *do*.). But I would guess that what gives his movies their immense appeal is their semi-intellectual, or to be more rude, 'metaphysical' content. His characters are like schoolboys who have just heard the startling new idea that 'God is dead'; this sets them off on torments of deep thought. Bergman's greatest 'dark' film, *The Seventh Seal*, reminds one of the

nightmares of life and death and religion that one had as child, the sense of mystery and the questions that no one will answer suggest the way religious symbols function in childhood and in fear. Bergman's power over audiences is that he has not developed philosophically beyond the awesome questions : audiences trained in more rational philosophy still respond emotionally to Bergman's kind of mysticism, his searching for 'the meaning of life,' his fatalism, and the archaic ogres of childhood and religion. Bergman is not a deep thinker, but he is an artist who moves audiences deeply by calling up their buried fears and feelings. People come out of his movies with 'something to think about' or, at least, to talk about.

Those who find Bergman profound and sophisticated are very likely to find Satyajit Ray rather too simple. I think that Ray, like Kurosawa, is one of the great new film masters, and that his simplicity is a simplicity arrived at, achieved, a master's distillation from his experience; but it is—and this may be another reason why audiences prefer Bergman—the simplicity to which we must respond with *feeling*. It is not the simplicity of a film like *David and Lisa*—which is simplicity at a pre-art level, simplicity of those who don't perceive complexities and have not yet begun to explore their medium.

People say that *David and Lisa* is a 'heartfelt' experience, but they gobble it up so easily because it appeals to feelings they already had. It's a movie about mental disturbances that couldn't disturb anybody. Similarly *Sundays and Cybele*, also a phenomenal box-office success, is gobbled up as 'artistic' (it's 'artistic' the same way that *Harper's Bazaar* fiction is 'beautifully literate'). Bosley Crowther says that *Sundays and Cybele* is 'what *Lolita* might conceivably have been had it been made by a poet and angled to be a rhapsodic song of innocence and not a smirking joke.' Surely only a satirist like Nabokov could have invented this eminent critic whose praise gives the show away—'angled to be a rhapsodic song of innocence.'

(One of the delights of life in San Francisco is observing the cultural chauvinism of New York from a safe distance. *Variety* informs us that improvement is expected in West Coast movie tastes now that the Western edition of the *New York Times* brings us Bosley Crowther. And Dwight MacDonald, who calls any place outside New York 'the provinces,' has a solution for the problems of American movies ; they should be made closer to the intellectual life of the nation—in New York. But it's the Eastern banks, not the Western minds, that are destroying our movies.)

The concept of humanity is so strong in Ray's films that a man who functioned as villain could only be a limitation of vision, a defect, an intrusion of melodrama into a work of art which seeks to illuminate experience and help us feel. There is, for example, a defect of this kind in De Sica's *Umberto D* : the landlady is unsympathetically caricatured so that we do not understand and respond to her as we do to the others in the film. I don't think Ray ever makes a mistake of this kind : his films are so far from the world of melodrama that such a mistake is almost unthinkable. We see his characters not in terms of good or bad, but as we see ourselves, in terms of failures and weaknesses and strength and, above all, as part of a human continuum—fulfilling, altering, and finally accepting ourselves as part of this humanity, recognizing that no matter how much we want to burst the bounds of experience, there is only so much we can do. This larger view of human experience—the simplicity of De Sica at his best, of Renoir at his greatest, is almost miraculously present in every detail of Satyajit Ray's films. Ray's method is perhaps the most direct and least impaired by commercial stratagems in the whole history of film. He does not even invent dramatic devices, shortcuts to feelings. He made no passes at the commercial market : he didn't even reach out toward Western conceptions of drama and construction, although as one of the founders of the Calcutta Film Society, he must have been familiar with these conceptions. He seems to have had, from the beginning, the intuitive knowledge that this was not what he wanted.

In the background of almost every major new figure in film today we see the same great man—Jean Renoir. In France, the critic André Bazin taught a film-loving juvenile delinquent named Francois Truffaut 'first' as Truffaut says, 'to love Renoir and then to know him.' The lives of Ray and Renoir intersected in 1950, when Ray, a young painter working as a layout artist for a British advertising firm, was struggling to work out a film treatment for *Pather Panchali*, and Renoir was in Calcutta filming *The River*, a movie that despite its weaknesses is perhaps a genre in itself—the only fictional film shot in a remote culture in which the director had the taste and sensitivity to present an outsider's view without condescension or a perfunctory 'documentary' style. Ray has said that 'the only kind of professional encouragement I got came from one single man'—Jean Renoir, who 'insisted that I shouldn't give up.'

There is a common misconception that Ray is a 'primitive' artist and although, initially, this probably worked to his advantage in this country (*Pather Panchali* was taken to be autobiographical, and 'true'

and important because it dealt with rural poverty), it now works to his disadvantage, because his later films are taken to be corrupted by exposure to 'Art,' and thus less 'true.' *The Apu Trilogy* expresses India in transition, showing the development of the boy Apu's consciousness from the primitive, medieval village life of *Pather Panchali* through the modern city streets and schools of Benaras to the University of Calcutta in *Aparajito,* and then, in *The World of Apu,* beyond self-consciousness to the destruction of his egotism, and the rebirth of feeling, the renewal of strength. But Ray himself is not a primitive artist any more than, say, Robert Flaherty was when he chronicled the life of the Eskimos in *Nanook of the North.* Ray was influenced by a wide variety of films, those of Renoir and De Sica in particular. (Sent by his employers to England for three months in 1950, he went to more than ninety films, and he has reported that the one that helped most to clarify his ideas was *The Bicycle Thief.*) Among his other influences are certainly Dovzhenko's *Earth* and Eisenstein, and probably von Sternberg. Just as *Nanook*, although a great work, seems primitive compared with a later, more complex Flaherty film like *Man of Aran, Pather Panchali* has a different kind of beauty, a more primitive kind, than later Ray films. But Ray's background is not Apu's : 'My grandfather was a painter, a poet, and also a scientist who, in addition to editing the first children's magazine in Bengal, had introduced the half-tone block to India. My father was equally well known. He . . . wrote, among other works, Bengal's classic Book of Nonsense—an Englishman might call him India's Edward Lear.' After graduating from the University of Calcutta with honours in physics and economics, the nineteen-year-old Ray, at the urging of Rabindranath Tagore, went to study at Tagore's school, Santiniketan. There, he 'developed some skill in drawing' and 'read widely in the history of art . . . studying in particular Chinese calligraphy.' After Tagore's death, he left the school ('There were no films there and somehow, I don't know how it happened, but films appealed to me.'). In Calcutta he worked as art director for a British advertising firm: 'I stayed with them a long while and went through every department. When I was in a position to do so I introduced into their advertisements a fusion of modern western and Bengal tradition, to give it a new look.'

In addition, he illustrated books, and it was after he had illustrated an edition of the popular novel *Pather Panchali* that he began to think about visualizing it on the screen.

> What I lacked was first-hand acquaintance with the milieu of the story. I could, of course, draw upon the book itself, which was a kind of encyclopaedia of Bengali rural life, but I knew that this was not enough. In any case, one has only to drive six miles out of the city to get to the heart of the authentic village. While far from being an adventure in the physical sense, these explorations . . . nevertheless opened up a new and fascinating world. To one born and bred in the city, it had a new flavour, a new texture : and its values were different. It made you want to observe and probe, to catch the revealing details, the telling gestures, the particular turns of speech. You wanted to fathom the mysteries of 'atmosphere'.

Ray's statements and articles have been widely published, and his English is perfectly clear, but the critics can't resist the chance to play sahib. *Pather Panchali* provided Crowther with an opportunity for a classic example of his style and perception : 'Chief among the delicate revelations that emerge from its loosely formed account of the pathetic little joys and sorrows of a poor Indian family in Bengal is the touching indication that poverty does not nullify love and that even the most afflicted people can find some modest pleasures in their worlds . . . Any picture as loose in structure or as listless in tempo as this one is would barely pass as a "rough cut" in Hollywood.' In a review of *Aparajito*, Kingsley Amis, then *Esquire's* movie critic, thought that 'Satyajit Ray, the director, seems to have set out with the idea of photographing without rearrangement the life of a poor Indian family, of reporting reality in as unshaped a form as possible.' *The World of Apu*, which died at the box-office, got short shrift from Macdonald : '*Pather* was about a family in a village. *Apu* is about a young writer in a city, a more complex theme, and I'm not sure Ray is up to it.' (Somehow he makes us feel that he's more sure than he ought to be; he condescends promiscuously.)

Each of the films of *The Apu Trilogy* represents a change, I think a development, of style. Unfortunately, those who responded to the slow rhythm of *Pather Panchali* felt that this pace was somehow more true to India than the faster pace of the third film, *The World of Apu.* But Ray's rhythm is derived from his subject matter, and for the college students and artists of *The World of Apu*, the leisurely flow of the seasons on which *Pather Panchali* was based would be ludicrous. Even those who prefer *Pather Panchali* to his later work should recognize that an artist cannot retain his first beautiful awkward expressiveness and innocence, and that to attempt to do so

would mean redoing consciously what had been beautiful because it was not completely conscious. An artist must either give up art or develop. There are, of course, two ways of giving up: stopping altogether or taking the familiar Hollywood course—making tricks out of what was once done for love.

Ray began his film career with a masterpiece, and a trilogy at that; this makes it easy to shrug off his other films as very fine but not really up to the trilogy (even critics who disparaged each film of the trilogy as it appeared, now use the trilogy as the measure to disparage his other works). It is true that the other films are smaller in scope. But if there had been no trilogy, I would say of *Devi*, 'This is the greatest Indian film ever made.' And if there had been no trilogy and no *Devi*, I would say the same of his still later *Two Daughters*, on Tagore stories, of which the first, *The Postmaster*, is a pure and simple masterpiece of the filmed short story form. (The second has memorable scenes, beauty, and wit, but is rather wearying.) Ray's least successful film that has been imported, *The Music Room* (made early, for respite, between the second and third parts of the trilogy), has such grandeur in its best scenes that we must revise customary dramatic standards. By our usual standards it isn't a good movie : it's often crude and it's poorly constructed; but it's a great experience. It's a study of *noblesse oblige* carried to extremity, to a kind of aesthetic madness. It recalls the film of *The Magnificent Ambersons* and, of course *The Cherry Orchard* but, more painfully, it calls up hideous memories of our own expansive gestures, our own big-role playing. We are forced to see the recklessness and egomania of our greatest moments— and at the same time we are forced to see the sordid banality of being practical. The hero is great *because* he destroys himself; he is also mad. I was exasperated by the defects of *The Music Room* when I saw it; now, a month later, I realize that I will never forget it. Worrying over its faults as a film is like worrying over whether *King Lear* is well constructed: it doesn't really matter.

Ray is sometimes (for us Westerners, and perhaps for Easterners also?) a little boring, but what major artist outside film and drama isn't? What he has to give is so rich, so contemplative in approach (and this we are completely unused to in the film medium—except perhaps in documentary) that we begin to accept our lapses of attention during the tedious moments with the same kind of relaxation and confidence and affection that we feel for the boring stretches in the great novels, the epic poems.

Although India is second only to Japan in the number of movies it produces. Ray is the only Indian director; he is, as yet, in a class by himself. Despite the financial conditions under which he works, despite official disapproval of his themes, despite popular indifference to his work, he is in a position that almost any filmmaker anywhere in the world might envy. The Indian film industry is so thoroughly corrupt that Ray could start fresh, as if it did not exist. Consider the Americans, looking under stones for some tiny piece of subject matter they can call their own, and then judge the wealth, the prodigious, fabulous heritage that an imaginative Indian can draw upon. Just because there has been almost nothing of value done in films in India, the whole country and its culture is his to explore and express to the limits of his ability; he is the first major artist to draw upon these vast and ancient reserves. The Hollywood director who re-makes biblical spectacles or Fannie Hurst stories for the third or sixth or ninth time is a poor man—no matter how big his budget—compared to the first film artist of India. American directors of talent can still try to beat the system, can still feel that maybe they can do something worth doing, and every once in a while someone almost does. In India, the poverty of the masses, and their desperate need for escapist films, cancels our illusions. Ray knows he can't reach a mass audience in India (he can't spend more than $40,000 on a production). Outside of West Bengal, his films are not understood (Bengali is spoken by less than fifteen per cent of India's population—of those, only twenty per cent can read). In other provinces his films, subtitled, appeal only to the Indian equivalent of the American art-house audience—the urban intellectuals—not only because the masses and the rural audiences want their traditional extravaganzas but because they can't read. Probably India produces so many films just because of the general illiteracy; if Indians could read subtitles, American and European films might be more popular. (India has so many languages, it's impractical to dub for the illiterates—the only justification for dubbing, by the way.)

It's doubtful if Ray could finance his films at all without the international audience that he reaches, even though it's shockingly small and he doesn't reach it easily. Indian bureaucrats, as 'image' conscious as our own and much more powerful in the control of films, prefer to send abroad the vacuous studio productions which they assure us are 'technically' superior to Ray's films (everyone and everything in them is so clean and shiny and false that they suggest interminable TV commercials).

Devi, based on a theme from Tagore, is here thanks to the

personal intercession of Nehru, who removed the censors' export ban. According to official Indian policy, *Devi* is misleading in its view of Indian life. We can interpret this to mean that, even though the film is set in the nineteenth century, the government is not happy about the world getting the idea that there are or ever were superstitions in India. In the film, the young heroine is believed by her rich father-in-law to be an incarnation of the goddess Kali. I don't know why the Indian government was so concerned about this — anyone who has tried to tell children how, for example, saints function in Catholic doctrine may recognize that we have a few things to explain, too. Those who grow up surrounded by Christian symbols and dogmas are hardly in a position to point a finger of shame at Kali worship—particularly as it seems so closely related to prayers to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. As the film makes clear, Kali is generally called 'Ma'.

The film has so many Freudian undertones that I was not surprised when the filmmaker sitting next to me in the empty theatre muttered, 'Think what Bunuel would do with this.' I'm grateful that it's Ray, not Bunuel and that the undertones stay where they belong — down under. Bunuel would have made it explicit. Ray never tells us that this is the good man's way of taking his son's bride away from him: he doesn't tell us that this is the old man's way of punishing his Westernized, Christianized son; he never says that religion is the last outpost of the old man's sensuality, his return to childhood and 'Ma' love. But we experience all this, just as we experience the easy drift of the lovely silly young girl into the auto-intoxication, the narcissism of believing that she is a goddess. She is certainly beautiful enough. In one sense the film is about what Christians might call the sin of pride : who find it not too difficult to believe that she is a goddess, fails to cure the nephew she adores; when the child dies, she goes mad. But that is a Christian oversimplification : what we see is the girl's readiness to believe, her liquid acquiescence; not so much *pride* as desire to please—the culmination, we suspect, of what the culture expects of a high-born girl. And, surrounded by so much luxury, what is there for the girl to do but try to please? The whole indolent life is centred on pleasure.

Ray creates an atmosphere that intoxicates us as well; the household is so rich and the rich people so overripe. The handsome, soft-eyed men in their silks and brocades are unspeakably fleshly; the half-naked beggars on the steps outside are clothed in their skins, but the rich are eroticized by their garments. And perhaps because of the camera work, which seems to derive from some of the best traditions of the silent screen and the thirties, perhaps because of the Indian faces themselves, the eyes have depths — and a disturbing look of helplessness — that we are unused to. It's almost as if these people were isolated from us and from each other by their eyes. It is not just that they seem exotic to us, but that each is a stranger to the others. Their eyes link them to the painted eyes of the Hindu idols, and in the film it is this religion which separates them. They are lost behind their eyes.

Sharmila Tagore (Tagore's great-granddaughter), fourteen when she played Apu's bride, is the seventeen-year-old goddess; she is exquisite, perfect (a word I don't use casually) in both these roles, and the men are wonderfully selected—so that they manage to suggest both the handsomeness of almost mythological figures and the rotting weakness of their way of life. Ray has been developing his own stock company, and anyone who mistook the principal players in the trilogy for people just acting out their own lives for the camera, may be startled now to see them in a nineteenth-century mansion. In the early parts of the trilogy, Ray was able to convince many people that he had simply turned his cameras on life; he performs the same miracle of art on this decadent, vanished period. The setting of *Devi* seems to have been caught by the camera just before it decays. The past is preserved for us disturbingly, ironically, in its jewelled frame. Are we not perhaps in the position of the 'advanced', ineffective young husband, who knows that his childish wife can't be Kali because he has 'progressed' from Kali worship to the idols of Christianity? (Can we distinguish belief in progress from the sin of pride?)

It is a commentary on the values of our society that those who saw truth and greatness in *The Apu Trilogy*, particularly in the opening film with its emphasis on the mother's struggle to feed the family, are not drawn to a film in which Ray shows the landowning class and its collapse of beliefs. It is part of *our* heritage from the thirties that the poor still seem 'real' and the rich 'trivial.' *Devi* should, however, please even Marxists if they would go to see it; it is the most convincing study of upper-class decadence I have ever seen. But it is Ray's feeling for the beauty within this disintegrating way of life that makes it convincing. Eisenstein cartooned the upper classes and made them hateful: they became puppets in the show he was staging. Ray, by giving them the respect and love that he gives the poor and struggling, helps us to understand their demoralization.

The rich, deluded father-in-law of *Devi* is as human in his dreamy sensuality as Apu's own poet father. Neither can sustain his way of life or his beliefs against the new pressures ; and neither can adapt.

Like Renoir and De Sica, Ray sees that life itself is good no matter how bad it is. It is difficult to discuss art which is an affirmation of life, without fear of becoming maudlin. But is there any other kind of art, on screen or elsewhere? 'In cinema,' Ray says, 'we must select everything for the camera according to the richness of its power to reveal.'

PAULINE KAEL
KPFA broadcast, 1962
Partisan Review, New York, Summer 1963

Teen Kanya

This triad set off a polemic which reached its crescendo with the release of *Charulata.*

With the release of the triad, keen Tagore readers noticed that Ray had at times deviated from the original episodes and many complained that he had taken too many liberties with the themes also. This was not an altogether new development. It has been noticed in *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito.* But the thrill that at last the Indian cinema has been put on the map of the world was much too overpowering. And the knowledgeable granted him the liberty because both the novels of Bibhutibhushan had too many events and a film director could not but be selective in the attempt to interpret the author.

But when Ray improvised upon and altered the beautiful descriptive passages of Tagore's denouement to suit his medium, people started talking about it. In private discussions he was often branded as an apostate. In *Charulata* Ray showed again that he was not going to be chary about his convictions. Thereafter followed a polemical article in a Bengali journal *Parichay* which questioned him for the liberties he had taken to film *Manihara, Postmaster, Samapti* and *Charulata.* This stirred up Ray's self-conscious placidity—an affection of his charismatic personality —and he wrote a long vigorous and stinging reply—one of the finest essays on the technicalities of interpreting literature in film. He however restricted his reply to *Charulata. Charulata* was of course topical. But did he choose to leave *Teen Kanya* out of it because he recognized like many of his admirers that the triad was one of his minor works?

Manihara is Ray's experiment with the macabre. It is intimate in the sense it has two principal characters. Ray wonderfully establishes the period with visuals but does not care for any precise statement about it. Having established the remoteness of the milieu, he sets about his task to take the story through to its macabre finale.

Ray did not get any help from Tagore for building the tensions till the time Phanibhusan needs the money. Till then nothing happened in the original story which could be visually rendered. Tagore gripped his readers by his sparkling narration of the maladjustment but this did precious little for Ray. Ray improvised upon the story to suit his medium and the result was scintillating.

In this taut film—which is a minor masterpiece—Ray is a delightful story-teller. In the dark theatre, the viewer relives the unhurried evening of his childhood when he loved to hear ghost stories with all the embellishments. For the adult audience *Manihara* is a fond savouring of long lost childhood experience. The eerie atmosphere for the finale has been ably constructed by shots of the deserted, moonlit garden, distant mooing of a cow and the camera stepping back through the courtyard, the stairs and a long deserted verandah at the approach of the sound of ornaments.

Postmaster is a simple story with a straightforward emotional appeal. In *Postmaster* Ray has not achieved the success which Tagore did in conveying pathos. Instead Ray has administered a few palpable shocks by introducing a lunatic. Possibly, he did that to establish the alienation of the Postmaster from his immediate surroundings yet this only distracts the viewers' attention.

Having chosen this story, Ray has suffered from its inherent limitations. The contrived slapstick situation at the opening of the film and of Apurba tip-toeing back home through the slush looks crude and contrived. In spite of everything Ray could not get where

Tagore got because of sheer convention. Tagore could allow Mrinmoyee to burst out in a sudden spurt of kisses which Apurba had begged of her before but could not get. Ray had to stop well ahead of that. It is the norm of Indian literature versus Indian cinema. As a result *Samapti* does not become the intimate cinema which it is meant to be and is reduced to a pale and dull imitation of Tagore.

AMALENDU BOSE
Montage, Mumbai, July 1966

Abhijan

A Masterpiece in Balance

Satyajit Ray's latest picture, *Abhijan*, has a substantial amount of its dialogue in Hindi, because its hero is a Rajput, whose family migrates to Bengal, and the heroine—a village girl from Bihar. It is also different from the director's previous films insofar as it is an action picture with a clearly defined plot.

A 14,000-feet affair based on a novel by Tarashankar, the film comprises ten sequences, and a prologue explaining the state of mind of the central character. The picture opens with the hero Narsingh (Soumitra Chatterjee), a proud and essentially noble taxi driver, undergoing humiliation which leaves him weak and demoralized. The climax of his frustrations comes when his taxi permit is cancelled for dangerous driving. In the company of his helper Rama (Robi Ghosh) he sets out for his village, but on the way is stopped by Sukhanram (Charuprakash Ghosh, an amateur who appeared as the would-be seducer in *Aparajito)*, a businessman who traffics in opium and women.

From here on the prologue gives way to the main story. Sukhan, who is accompanied by his victim Gulabi (Waheeda Rehman), makes Narsingh drive them to his town. Sukhan sees the possibility of using Narsingh and induces him to run a taxi service between his town and the next. With no hope in the future, Narsingh accepts the offer. However, he finds a friend in a Christian driver Joseph (Jnanesh Mukherjee), who takes him home with him. There Narsingh falls in love with Joseph's sister Neeli (Ruma Guha Thakurta), who in turn is in love with the one-legged son of the local Minister. The plot eventually resolves itself into Narsingh and Gulabi coming together, each helping the other to extricate himself/herself from Sukhanram's evil clutches.

Abhijan is a psychological examination of the disillusioned contemporary man who, though wishing to make something good of himself, still falls victim to evil temptations. One can think of Narsingh as an Indian version of the Angry Young Man, who at heart is an idealist. It is this aspect which gives the picture its importance as a serious film.

Use of Symbols

The symbol which Ray uses to embody the idea of an amoral world is the small, elegant gold cigarette-lighter, which Sukhanram gives to Narsingh as a means of wooing him into his opium racket. The other symbol—and one that mocks the frequent weaknesses of Narsingh—is the tattooed lion on his arm which symbolizes his ancestral pride, the element which finally impels him to save Gulabi and himself from domination by Sukhan.

The picture opens with the frustrated and tormented Narsingh as reflected in a jaggedly broken mirror, which suggests the hero's state of mind (Ray has used mirrors in almost all his films to gain interesting visual effects.). This is followed by a 40-minute prologue during which the credit titles are interspersed with scenes of action —a device probably not used by any other filmmaker. The last of the credit titles appears over a shot of the closing of a gate at a level-crossing.

The long prelude has a good deal of point to it in that it establishes why Narsingh is so demoralized. It also introduces interestingly a number of powerful musical themes which Ray has composed himself in order to create the desired emotional impact. If the music over the night drive is analysed in terms of its descriptive tones (this is just before Sukhanram stops Narsingh), one can hear the notes that forebode a happy ending, or at least a new beginning for Narsingh and the girl he is about to see.

Bounce Lighting

There are other elements (apart from the music) that play an important role in the total effect of this film — the location settings, dominated as these are by the extraordinary rock formation that lies on the edge of the town of Dubrajpur, where much of the shooting was executed. In this very dramatic natural setting of amazing-looking rocks we witness: Narsingh's walk with Joseph to his home rather early in the film ; the late night scene where Neeli (Ruma Guha Thakurta) pleads with Narsingh to drive her and her lover to the station; and the violent scene towards the end of the film where Narsingh knocks down Joseph for remonstrating with him against smuggling opium.

These crucial scenes are strengthened in their effect by the second and third elements : the use of lighting and camerawork. Two of the finest examples of the power of lighting are the night scene among the rocks with the sky just sufficiently lit to outline the tall, isolated palms standing on the horizon, and the first scene of Sukhan's room with the back wall splashed by what purports to be early morning sunlight. This particular effect was achieved by what Ray and his cameramen call bounce lighting, which gives the effect of daylight for interior shots.

In the third scene, among the rocks, there is a unique piece of camerawork : the visual sensation of Narsingh running distractedly among the rocks in search of Joseph. It is difficult to recall such a scene in any other film : a camera movement used to convey a state of mind. One of the most important things for any film technician to notice in Ray's new film is the absolute perfection of the back projection which he uses in a number of scenes when Narsingh is driving his taxi.

When I witnessed the rough editing of this film minus the music and the sound effects, the thing that impressed me most was the performances of Waheeda Rehman as Gulabi and Soumitra Chatterjee as Narsingh (he has a range which, if fully utilized, will correspond to that of Alec Guinness). But seeing the finished film, I find these individually excellent performances (especially that of Waheeda who has shed almost all the mannerisms of a professional) less important than the total effect of the film which is the longest of any of Ray's pictures and by far the most ambitious. Where Waheeda Rehman makes her great contribution to *Abhijan* is in her sincerity. Her love scene with its numerous moods is exquisite, and she is beautiful from every angle.

Between the first private screening and the premiére Ray, who is his own best critic, cut out two scenes and one shot on the grounds that he found them 'too arty' and that they held up the action. As a result of this last moment decision *Abhijan* has become one of those rare films — a masterpiece, which is perfect in balance from the first to the last shot.

MARIE SETON
Filmfare, Mumbai 19 October 1962

Mahanagar

For *The Big City* Ray has chosen a subject which cannot fail to evoke understanding and sympathetic amusement in Western audiences, and he has embodied it in a style which is positively Hollywoodian in its crispness, in the polished classicism of its film craft and, above all, in the adroit handling of situation which is both amusing and moving. It recalls Capra at his best; indeed the ending, with its uncompromising and optimistic assertion of ideals over expediency is pure Capra.

An Indian family is rapidly introduced: Arati, her little son, her bank-teller husband, Subrata, his teenage sister whom he is putting through college, and his dependent mother and ex-schoolteacher father. The story concerns the strains produced by Arati's change of role from housewife to joint breadwinner (as a canvasser for home knitting machines) and the growth of self-assurance from earning her own money and meeting more consciously 'emancipated' women such as her Anglo-Indian colleague Edith.

Ray's mastery in making the comic aspect enhance the serious appears notably in the exposition of Subrata's feelings. Early in the

film there is an episode in which Edith persuades the bashful Arati to wear lipstick to boost her sales appeal. This is played for maximum humorous effect. Later, when Subrata is at home through unemployment, Arati asks him to get some money from her handbag and he discovers the lipstick. Thus Ray epitomizes both his social humiliation at the reversal of marital roles and his sense of personal disconnection from Arati by her apparent surreptitiousness (which is really a manifestation of her residual modesty and a desire not to upset the family even more) and the foreign–worldliness of her working life which the lipstick symbolizes.

Undoubtedly this film has a totally different aura from Ray's previous work. The traditional family virtues which he presents here are the universals of human relations in any civilized society rather than the particularities of Indian culture. The ambivalent nostalgia for the past has been banished in favour of a clear-eyed cosmopolitanism.

Seen from this point of view, the film's highly westernized pace marks not a discontinuity in Ray's artistic development, but a consistent application of the principle underlying his earlier achievements which has been to elicit his film-style from the life-style he is depicting.

B.H.
Film, London 1965

Charulata

The name itself is elusive. Not Ray, but something between Rye and Roy; not Sat-y-a-jit, with the syllables neatly separated as in a child's reading-book, but something closer to Shotachit. It's a critical disadvantage to admire a director's work immensely and to know that one can never quite come to terms with pronouncing his name. and to come precisely to terms with his style, so elusive yet so direct, so flexible and yet so classically strict, so absorbent and yet so expansive, is hardly any easier. 'One is left—for all the world like one more MacMahonist—gasping inarticulately: beauty, tenderness, lyricism,' wrote Richard Roud of *Charulata* in the Autumn *Sight and Sound*.

Beauty, tenderness, lyricism; but also a rigorous discipline. There is a characteristic Ray scene—perhaps *the* characteristic Ray scene. A shadowed interior, shuttered against the sun; rooms rather large and cluttered, with the sounds of birds or animals just penetrating the walls; two people, arriving at some moment of discovery about themselves, caught in an instant of absorbed silence. Nothing is going to be said, because emotionally we are still in a climate of Victorian reticence. Writers as far apart as Henry James and Chekhov have known the power of such moments, when the tension (not necessarily sexual tension; it can take other forms) builds up against the safety-valve of social convention, and the suspense is in the unbreakable silence. It's a tension which relatively few Western filmmakers can use in quite this way, because we no longer live in that society. Seeing a film like *Charulata,* though, I'm reminded of Edith Wharton's comment on the clash between the new novelists (new novelists now of forty years ago) who were 'so put to it to find new horrors in the domestic circle,' and the writers of her own day. 'It was certainly easier [for us]; for the abysses, which were always so shallow, have grown even more so, now that they are on the itinerary of all the luxury cruisers.'

To attempt to annex Satyajit Ray as a last Victorian would be absurd. But it isn't merely because *Charulata* is set in 1880, and full of references to Gladstone and Macaulay, to English politics and the rotundities of nineteenth century leader writers, that one is made aware of the connections. The film brings together the two characters who seem most thoroughly to arouse Ray's sympathies, and who have appeared most persistently in his films. And neither of them is, in Western terms, quite of the present day.

Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee), the literary-minded cousin who awakens Charu, the editor-publisher's wife, from the lethargy of the long Indian afternoons, is a variation on Ray's eternal student, Apu, declaiming his poetry to the night or the river. Both the young men in *Two Daughters,* the boy in *Kanchenjunga,* the husband in *Devi,* are all recognizably of the same type: Trofimov in a ragged dhoti.

They believe passionately but indeterminately in the power of words; they tend to play at real situations as though they had encountered them in a novel, so that they seldom manage quite to grasp what is really happening, until they find that while they were thinking of literature life has crept up on them. Faced with demands from life, their first reaction is to run back to literature. No filmmaker has ever been more conscious of the insidious fascination of books—or of the necessity to read and write. As Amal covers the pages of the notebook which Charu has prettily bound for him, or Charu herself sits stubbornly glowering at her own blotted manuscript, Ray makes one aware not of 'writing' as an abstraction, but of the texture of the Bengali script on paper. Learning to read (Apu teaching his wife, the post-master teaching the little girl in *Two Daughters*) is like falling in love.

The second Ray character is the New Woman — and she deserves those Victorian capital letters. Does Charu herself have an improbably large freedom, when one remembers that decades later, at the time of *A Passage to India*, the Indian woman was still locked in purdah? I don't know, although one Indian critic, writing of the film in relation to the Tagore novel from which it is adapted, does suggest that Ray's Charu, played with charm and a touch of steel by Madhabi Mukherjee, is of a stronger and more independent spirit. In any case she is very closely related to the heroine of *Mahanagar*, his preceding film. There the setting is modern, and the girl finds herself forced into unwilling competition with her husband: taking a job, and discovering that she actually enjoys it. *Mahanagar* conveys a good deal of this through such engagingly trivial details as the girl's way of eating her breakfast: first picking tentatively at a few scraps, a little shy of breaking the custom that husband and wife eat apart; later, once established in her own mind as a wage-earner, wolfing down great platefuls of food.

Ray's women characters in themselves sum up a range of historical attitudes. The poor little wife in *Devi* is tradition personified : quietly submissive, classically patient, she is trapped into her appalling role of goddess. In *The World of Apu*, the wife is still submissive, though her docility is tempered by self-discovery; in *Two Daughters* the taming of the village tomboy is a contest between equals, largely because of the student's inadequacies as Petruchio; in *Kanchenjunga* the women are more modern, and have acquired the boredom of sophistication. And in *Mahanagar* the heroine is right out of the chrysalis. *Charulata* may look backwards in time, but the heroine herself is the most completely realized of all Ray's women. The wife in *Mahanagar* finds herself in a situation which her personality must expand to meet. Charu, however, is like an Ibsen heroine in that she knows too much about the sources of her own discontent.

Charu is first seen in one of her long afternoons of boredom: wandering around the shuttered rooms, calling pettishly to a servant, fingering a book, fetching her opera glasses (in a swish of skirts and movement which will be echoed later when she marches through the house with her first published article), to peep through the shutters at a passer-by. For a moment, this portly stranger fills the empty horizon. Her husband (Sailen Mukherjee) is preoccupied with his politics and his paper, *The Sentinel*. It's his real devotion to Charu, however, that brings catastrophe upon them. First, so that she can have her sister-in-law's companionship, he brings in her brother to manage *The Sentinel*; and the brother robs him. (The nature of the companionship is shown in a charmingly silly card-game, won by indolent Charu while Manda, cross-eyed with determination, is boasting of her own will-power over the cards.) Secondly, he invites his cousin Amal to entertain Charu with the literary talk which he can't himself be bothered with; and out of this companionship comes Charu's undeclared love for Amal.

Even here, though, it's not so much love for Amal himself as for a dream Amal—a dream summed up in the sequence where Amal lies writing on the ground, while Charu floats backwards and forwards above him in a swing. Timed by the lazy movements of the swing, the sequence is taken beyond the simply lyrical by Ray's suggestion that each character is unconsciously using the other as a feature in his own romantic landscape.

One little sequence shows Ray's sidelong humour in alliance with his ability to hold a scene balanced on a knife-edge between its players. Amal has the chance to marry a rich girl and go to England. Bhupati, Charu's husband, is fired to a wonderful vision of what his own life in England might have been; grandly oblivious of the real Amal's staggering unfitness for the role, he sees him as 'Young Bengal', striding down Whitehall with a rolled umbrella, dazzling the Liberal politicians on whom (in 1880) intellectual Indians think their future depends; Amal, meanwhile, has his own dreamy vision — Byron, the Mediterranean, a fantasy of poetic encounters. And Charu, standing slightly apart knowing perfectly well that Amal, whatever he may say, is going to take this chance, sees her own future without him.

Throughout this section of the film, there is a mixture of playfulness and high seriousness which seems to me extraordinarily to echo early E. M. Forster—not the Forster of *A Passage to India*, but rather of the short stories and of novels like *A Room with a View*. Amal bursts into the house in a gale of wind, nature providing the appropriate danger signal as it does with some of Forster's cheerful pagans. He frisks about between Charu and her silly sister-in-law, laughs at them as Progressive Woman and Reactionary Woman, infuriates Charu by showing that he doesn't rate her literary opinions much above those of Reactionary Woman. Clumsy and conceited, tiring and amiable, he is very like one of Forster's young men; and it wouldn't be too difficult to imagine Charu, with her excess of sensibility, wondering what to make of Howard's End. Is this the strictly Indian Ray, giving us entirely Indian characters? Or is he consciously or unconsciously admitting Western literary influences, and creating the spirit of early Bloomsbury in Calcutta, 1880? I don't know enough about India even to guess the answer, but I find the puzzle fascinating.

Meanwhile, the more solidly Victorian element of the plot is beginning to take hold. Bhupati learns of his brother-in-law's theft, and makes it clear to his wife and cousin that what he finds agonizing is not the loss of money but the act of treachery. Pulled up short on the edge of another betrayal, Amal goes away—to marry his heiress. Bhupati takes Charu off for a seaside holiday; and on the empty beach (a remote echo here of *The Lady with the Little Dog*) they plan a new paper, in which Charu will have a share. Then, shatteringly, Bhupati discovers Charu's feelings for Amal. The film ends on a gesture of reconciliation: the hands stretch out towards each other, but before they touch Ray freezes the shot. He ends his film on calm still images : the corridors and galleries of the house; the servant standing by; the hands not quite touching. The moment is tentative and incomplete, the shots frozen to suggest not finality but possibility.

Some people have complained that the last sequences tip over too far into melodrama. The brother-in-law is too obviously a shady character; a storm blows up at the inevitable moment; the paper-merchant from whom Bhupati learns about the thefts is played with Dickensian relish. It seems to me, however, that Ray has been adroit here in preparing his ground. All through the film, one has kept an awareness of the Victorian scene at the back of one's mind. The house, splendidly wall-papered and finished with staid European sofas on which no one ever thinks of sitting, is a conscious compromise between Eastern grace and Western decorum. But in the last scenes Charu also has a high Victorian collar under her sari; Bhupati is strapped into a tight jacket. They look sterner and more formal; Victorians as well as Indians, caught up in a situation which knocks the props from under their ordered confidence. Beneath the shallows stretches the Jamesian abyss of betrayal.

It's impossible to tell how far this is an intentional effect and how far a happy accident. And it's impossible to gauge the full degree of intention behind Ray's many English references, here and in other films. Offhand, I can only remember one actual appearance by the English in a Ray film—the tourists who stroll about the hotel grounds in *Kanchenjunga*. This film, which I've seen only once and in a version without subtitles, is set in British India, in one of those hill stations which (as Malcolm Muggeridge discovered in his *Twilight of Empire*) remains forever Cheltenham. The military band plays at teatime; the industrialist, trying to rouse the young student's ambitions, talks of hitting sixes over the pavilion; an optimistic bird watcher scrabbles about the hillside; a bar of Cadbury's chocolate is handed over as a token of love.

Like the echoes of Western music, or the bold military barks of the madman in *Two Daughters* such references need to be approached with a certain caution. An English audience cannot but find them seductively charming which may not be entirely the intention. The Viceroys have gone, leaving behind this slightly preposterous jumble of music and milk chocolate. In *Charulata* a fascinating use is made of the two languages. English is the language of politics, and Bhupati in his office thinks English and writes English, rolling out for *The Sentinel* leaders which celebrate the victories of Gladstonian Liberalism. Charu herself is entirely of Bengal. When she comes to write, Ray flashes on to the screen a momentary evocation of the village in which she grew up, with its river, turning water-wheels and bare, white landscape. Even for Progressive Woman, identity has to be tracked back into the past.

The unresolved theme of old and new is of course an endlessly recurring one: from the first shots of the train in *Pather Panchali*, through *Jalsaghar*, with the old nobleman shoring up his palace against the inroads of the new men, and *Devi*, with its painful victory of superstition, to *Mahanagar* and *Charulata*. *Mahanagar* ultimately fails because it comes near to making a De Sica statement rather than allowing a situation to expand of itself. Towards the end of the

film, the wife is busy selling her sewing-machines, and the husband is out of work. She defends an Anglo-Indian colleague against her employer (previously seen as rather an amiable man, he's now lit crudely from below in a manner too reminiscent of Soviet comments on capitalism), and loses her own job. Together, husband and wife walk off into the city crowd.

The ending of *Mahanagar* is generalized and sentimental: a flurry of plot to be got through, overtones of melodrama, and then a final shot which echoes too many scenes of little people lost in a big city. By contrast, the conclusion of *Charulata* is exact, particular, and beautiful: an ending which brings the film safely through a couple of melodramatic incidents and out on the other side. This time nothing is implied or imposed: the film stops where it must. In fact, there's a case for *Charulata* as the surest of all Ray's films in its emotional touch. Certainty about atmosphere Ray has always had, but in the past he has sometimes faltered over plot. His most successful films have been those like *Pather Panchali, Two Daughters* or *Jalsaghar*, in which what story-line there is can be carried atmospherically. *Mahanagar* fumbles its plot, and almost drops it. *Charulata* is only deceptive in that its story looks simple.

Critics of what are usually called the humanist directors complain that they try to make us share a common experience ('universalize' it) by over-simplification. I don't think this has ever been true of Ray, and in *Charulata* the interplay of sophistication and simplicity is extraordinary. The whole small business of Charu's literary competition with Amal, for instance, and the impulses of jealousy, crossness, obstinacy and love which work on her, is very subtle indeed. Her feeling that Amal is writing in *her* notebook, and for her, in those long afternoons by the swing; her irritation when Amal jokingly asks the sister-in-law what magazine to send his story to ; everyone's annoyance when Amal bounds in at precisely the wrong moment with the ice-cream that is to celebrate publication, and has to fling his sweetmeats to the cat: out of half-a-dozen such incidents emerges a motive which isn't apparent to Charu herself. But the incidents are never enough in themselves to break the film's even flow. Nothing, in any direct narrative sense, has happened.

People have said, as they usually do of a Ray film, that *Charulata* is slow. 'Full of unpregnant pauses,' wrote Kenneth Tynan, in a review which damned with the remotest of praise. Certainly there are moments when nothing in particular happens, and the camera goes tracking down the corridors, or pauses in a kind of visual yawn at the cool, shaded emptiness. This isn't the impatient existentialist boredom of the West, but an expression of a world which has stopped waiting for something to happen: part of the large lethargy of India. 'This restfulness of gesture is the peace that passeth understanding . . . When the whirring of action ceases it becomes visible, and reveals a civilization which the West can disturb but will never acquire. The hand stretches out for ever, the lifted knee has the eternity though not the sadness of the grave . . .' Forster, of course, in the novel one still hopes Ray may one day be able to film. As Forster had to confront India, so it seems that Ray must sooner or later confront England. Where better than among the echoes of the Marabar Caves?

PENELOPE HOUSTON
Sight and Sound, London
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Kapurush O Mahapurush

1 A charlatan prophet

The London Film Festival ended last week and if readers outside London feel annoyed that I have lately given so much space to an event from which they are geographically excluded, let them agitate (as I hereby do) for the Arts Council to make up its mind that cinema is an art, and to finance a chain of National Film Theatres in the great provincial centres.

A few thousand letters on the same lines to Miss Jennie Lee would likewise do no harm. And it would help if they emphasized that the NFT and its new satellites should be granted the same artistic autonomy, free from Arts Council control that applies in the case of

subsidized theatres.

The closing sessions of this year's festival yielded up (apart from movies already bought for art-house showing, on which I must postpone comment) a double-bill of Indian short stories, directed by Satyajit Ray. *Kapurush*, the first of the pair, is a sentimental trifle, leaden with coincidence, at which I disdainfully sniffed in Venice two months ago. A young writer guiltily bumps into a discarded girl-friend, now unhappily married to a paunchy, tea-planting Anglophile, in which role Haradhan Banerjee—flaunting his pipe, his golf-clubs, his smugness and his snobbery as if they were Birthday Honours—lends the film its only distinction.

Mahapurush ('The Holy Man') is something much richer : you could almost describe it as an Indian amalgam of *Volpone* and *Tartuffe*. It seems that well-to-do, middle-aged Indians are every bit as liable to squander their money on phoney religious cults as their counterparts in the Bible Belt (and points west) of the United States. Ray's protagonist played with fleshy, androgynous relish by Charu Prakash Ghosh, is a messianic fraud to end them all. We first see him extending his great toes from a train for wayside worshippers to kiss; next just before dawn, he goes into a carefuly timed aria, beseeching the sun to rise, which it dutifully does.

Widower won over

A wealthy widower, converted by observing this miracle, offers him unlimited food and shelter; daily audiences are held, in the course of which the prophet declares that he taught Einstein and Plato most of what they knew, and did his best to enlighten Jesus Christ. (He refers to the Crucifixion as the 'Crucifact', since he was there when it happened.) The widower's daughter joins her father in deciding to take holy vows, to the intense annoyance of her boy-friend, who conspires with a group of like-minded sceptics to prove the guru a charlatan.

Exotic in detail ('I thought you were mixing music and vegetable to create a new universe,' one character casually remarks to another), the film as a whole is a small satiric masterpiece, relevant to any country where transcendental religion still survives. Its wit has the ribald toughness of first-rate vaudeville—something we never expected of Satyajit Ray, but of which we would like a good deal more. 'The Holy Man' cries out for a wider audience . . .

KENNETH TYNAN

The Observer Weekend Review, 21 November 1965

2

One looks forward to the release of another opus in the accumulating works of Satyajit Ray with an eagerness that almost invites disappointment. Yet, making allowances for this, *Kapurush* is, at the beginning, something less than one had hoped for. The free flow of images which moved along so superbly and spontaneously from the very outset in *Charulata* has become slightly choppy and discordant; lighting is exaggerated and somewhat melodramatic, the camera work a little self-conscious and contrived. Soumitra Chatterjee's sufferings as the unexpected visitor seem a little out of proportion; his agonized face in the shadows is truly Dostoyevskian, yet he is only a slightly foolish lover, undergoing the pangs of his indecisiveness. Similarly, Haradhan Banerjee appears a little too boorish and simple a husband, Madhabi Mukherjee a little too enigmatic and stilted a wife, to be wholly believable. It is only after the long opening scenes that the two central characters begin to emerge with significant depth and credibility.

In the case of Karuna, the wife, this is done largely in the first flashback, where we see her full of the flowing feeling she has since bottled up. Young, tender, vulnerable, and very much in love, she has come rushing to her lover with the news of her family's imminent departure, expecting him to propose a way whereby they can be together. The poignant moments of her disenchantment, when she reads in his face his fear and reluctance, are the finest moments in the film; and as she walks out, having gained a terrible new insight into the situation, we have been touched. Those moving moments give us the perspective with which to understand and sympathize with her self-control during the later scenes.

As for Amitabha, the young man, our insights regarding him begin in the flashback but continue to grow and expand throughout his whispered conversation with Karuna at night across the sitting room, his painfully clumsy rendezvous with her at the picnic spot while the husband dozes. He slowly emerges as a man riddled by doubts and uncertainties, eager to reach out for the one meaningful person in his life but fearful of the responsibilities involved, needing to be reassured and comforted. We begin to see beyond a doubt that his efforts to get her to run off with him are a sort of rite he feels compelled to perform, that he does not really intend to be convincing, that he is counting on her not to be convinced. Otherwise, why the insistence that she tell him whether she is happy with this man, when he must know, as we do, that her pride will not permit her to answer? Why the timid, halting approach to her on the picnic

grounds, the sorry device of tossing her a note at the one moment when he could have spoken to some inner necessity; but it is not the need of a grown man; it is the need of a distressed and worried child. In the light of what has gone on between them earlier, it is a need she is not prepared to fulfil, perhaps could never have fulfilled.

Given the essential natures of the two, the ending becomes quite clear. Though in a whirlpool of conflicting emotions, he has not really expected her to show up at the station; his momentary delight quickly fades as his fears reassert themselves. But he need not be concerned; she too has grasped the emotions which lie beneath his words, and has no intention of leaving with him. Why then did she come? Perhaps because in her achingly empty life, she was drawn irresistibly to see him once more, perhaps too she came with some half-formed idea of testing him. At the film's end, both remain locked in their separate destinies; they have met again, but now more than ever they can be of no help to each other. It is this terrible reality that Ray has constructed for us, and the fact that we are touched and saddened, and full of renewed insight about an aspect of human relations, shows how skilful Ray has been despite the film's unsteady beginning.

JANE JACOBS
Indian Film Culture, no. 6, 1966

Nayak

The most striking feature of Satyajit Ray's films as contrasted with many in the international field at present, is their concern with 'ordinary' people, 'normal' psychology, and unspectacular situations —not with sexual pathology, morbid alienation, or the violence of war, revolution and crime. His films in short are quiet. He is thus anti-romantic in two ways—rejecting both the escape world of sentimental romance, and the horrific world of romantic sensationalism. *Nayak* takes a very romantic theme—the ordinary 'girl in the street' who meets the hero of 'every girl's dream'—and brings it to a studied anti-climax.Thus far realism. But at the same time the dark side of life is underplayed. Arindam Mukherjee is too decent (could he really have retained his innocence so long as to be taken in by Promila Chatterjee?) and the 'bad' characters only harmlessly ridiculous.

Through the boy-meets-girl story emerges the main theme of *Nayak,* the contrast between reality and the romantic dream (as represented by the popular films of Arindam the 'hero'). For the girl, Miss Sen Gupta, with her sophisticated magazine for modern women and her sharp probing mind, is not a *bhakta* like the mother and daughter in Arindam's compartment or the other women on the train (who are compared to the *gopinis* of Krishna), but a down-to earth kind of person who tells Arindam bluntly at their first meeting that she does not go to the cinema because films are unrealistic ('heroes should not be God-like'). Henceforth their conversation plays continually on this contrast betwen reality and romance, in the course of which the 'reality' behind the 'romantic' appearance of Arindam is laid bare. For Arindam is passing through a crisis of insecurity (as revealed in his dreams), and is drawn to confess himself to this 'formidable' young lady, as he calls her; drawn to reveal the whole truth about himself—the sacrifice of his youthful idealism and friends, the sordid liaison with a married woman, his drunkenness verging on suicidal despair. Meanwhile, on her side initial antagonism gives way to sympathy and interest. Though opposite, their minds respond in lively repartee; jokingly they comment on the fact that neither is yet married. After the drunken night on the train, where he had revealed his need for her understanding, and she her concern for his welfare, the way is open for a highly romantic ending : do not the pure save the depraved through love (Victor Hugo, Dostoevsky, etc.)? This temptation is deliberately eschewed : in fact one might say the whole point of the film is to avoid it. Next morning at breakfast, that most unromantic hour of the day, they can acknowledge their regard for each other, but also the fact that their worlds can never meet—his the world of 'shadows' (Bengali word for films), she 'out in the street, in trams and buses.' They part without emotion: at Delhi station he is once again the strong smiling hero surrounded by his fans, and she walks off in excited conversation with her uncle

—they do not even notice each other on the platform. The film is faithful to its 'normal' realism.

But how can the normal be made interesting? What is the point of a work of art that tells us what one already knows? I would say the delight of this film lies in its structure—the way the themes are patterned—and in the pleasure of recognizing the familiar pinpointed by art. These are both features of classicism. *Nayak* is like *Kanchenjunga* in its commonplace undramatic material arranged in counter-pointing themes, especially as presented through contrasting groups of characters. But this patterning is not merely formal—it also has moral depth, it investigates the central moral issue from a variety of angles. Perhaps the key sentence of the film occurs when Arindam and Miss Sen Gupta are discussing conscience. Arindam says that conscience is a nuisance he would like to get rid of, but the girl retorts: 'Isn't that what makes you human?' It is conscience that refuses deceit, including the sweet deception of romance. There would be no conflict between 'box office' (a recurrent motif) and truth, were it not for conscience. Arindam's manager Jyoti represents 'practical' realism (without conscience) and is proportionately less interesting as a human being.

The sub-plot on the the train concerns the efforts of an ad-man to hook a leading industrialist, for which he is even prepared to use his wife as a bait—to which she reacts by announcing her intention of entering films (he is horrified). Theatre, film, advertising—these three worlds of make-believe, or deception, are continually counter-pointed to the demands of reality, conscience, truth. But the antithesis is not simply of good to bad. Arindam emerges as a man of character and intelligence, whereas Mr Aghore Chatterjee, who never goes to the cinema 'on principle' and lectures on the moral degradation of our times, is a figure of fun. The main point seems to be that one should not deceive oneself—which enables Arindam to achieve an integrity equal to that of Miss Sen Gupta. The pleasure of the film lies in the way these counter-pointing themes (romance – reality, innocence – experience, deception – honesty, cynicism – conscience, etc.) are continually evoked by words or symbols as the camera passes from one group of characters to another. Take the child for instance : a symbol of innocence—that innocence which Arindam's conscience regrets and his confession evokes. As Bulbul, the daughter of Mr Bose the industrialist, who is lying sick in the upper berth when Arindam enters the compartment he is to share with the family. Mr Bose is indignant at leaving a depraved film star with his daughter, but Bulbul, like her mother, is a devoted fan of Arindam, and under the 'magic' influence of her hero's presence, recovers from her sickness. Arindam makes friends with another little girl he meets in the corridor, and later calls to her when he is drunk : she vanishes. These are not the heavily manipulated symbols of Teutonic tradition but the lightest suggestions on a completely naturalistic level. When Miss Sen Gupta asks Arindam for his autograph, she is careful to point out that it is for her little cousin, and this is echoed when at the end of the journey, Bulbul asks for an autograph—each is true to herself, and who is to say which is truer? Such echoes and resolutions give a rounded classical completeness to the form. When Miss Sen Gupta first sets out to interview Arindam for her magazine (to discover the real Arindam), she asks him: 'Don't you feel there is something missing in your life? Some emptiness somewhere?' He evades the question (would hurt his box-office), but at their last meeting, next morning in the dining car over breakfast, when she asks him how he is, he repeats her earlier words in reply :

Miss Sen Gupta :	How are you?
Arindam:	You know everything—you tell me.
S. G. :	Fine
A :	Not quite
S. G. :	Why not ?

A: There is something missing, some emptiness somewhere.

The roles are reversed : he expresses doubts about his box-office, his future, she reassures him. Thus conflict, drama, violence are resolved. Such texture is extremely dense—hardly a scene, hardly a line is superfluous: all have their place in the balancing pattern. The film thus requires an attention, especially to detail, which many a cinema-goer is too relaxed to give. There are less concessions than usual to farce and excitement. The themes emerge in a multitude of ways with varying irony. Arindam is himself a victim of play-acting when the girl who seduces him feigns a breakdown to avoid revealing she is married. In relation to the declamatory style of Mukunda Lahiri, Arindam's acting is realistic—all the better to deceive! The sub-plot leads into that most absurd of all forms of make-believe—religious mania. A fat holy man, who has been in the ad-man's compartment all along, spraying his mouth and saying not a word, suddenly announces himself as representative of the World-Wide Will Workers, who are planning a publicity campaign prior to expansion of activities. The ad-man shows interest when a modest budget

(realism!) is announced. The train journey too, which encompasses the whole action, is a dimension of unreality, lifting people out of their ordinary lives, with a 'form' like the film or play—beginning, middle, and end 'containing' drama. And finally this is a realistic film about the unreality of films.

All this is conveyed partly through dialogue, but essentially through images. The type-casting is masterly—vivid, particular, but not quite caricatural: the vain industrialist with his slow deliberate movements, the nervy ad-man half cocky half fawning, Biresh the thin bespectacled political agitator, Jyoti the ferrety manager, Shankarda the strong-willed man of integrity. The two dream sequences are the opportunity for brilliant virtuoso passages in purely film terms, both surrealistic in technique—the first passing from euphoria to the macabre with a frighteningly chilling effect (when the music stops and the wind blows), the second especially memorable for the great white entrance door of the club standing bare in a kind of grove. Against the continual rhythm of the train (completely authentic even to the changing sound in corridor and toilet), the film builds up its own rhythm of alternating attitudes. The skill of this kind of interweaving with perfectly timed cutting and balanced variation, has been gradually brought to perfection through Satyajit Ray's career. But there is a danger that in this pursuit of flawless technique, perfectly rounded form, the depths of the subject matter may not be fully explored, urgency is subdued, anguish smoothed over. Although the film brings Arindam to the point of suicide in drunken self-disgust (most convincingly played by Uttam Kumar, whose performance throughout is impressively self-possessed), this episode does not have the harrowing impact it might have had. Similarly, the burning ghat scene, where Arindam is shown passing through a moral and religious crisis, comes across rather lamely. But at the social level, where the film is entirely successful, the play of commitment and disguise is beautifully elaborated—with wit, sensitivity, and restraint. This sensitive restraint is well illustrated by the closing passage between Arindam and Miss Sen Gupta: she tears up the interview which she had been surreptitiously (but not unknown to him) writing, while he was unburdening his past—'are you going to write your article from memory?' he asks; and she replies: 'I'll keep it in mind' or 'I'll think about it.' And that is as far as their feelings are allowed to go.

DAVID MCCUTCHION
Montage, Mumbai, July 1966

Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne

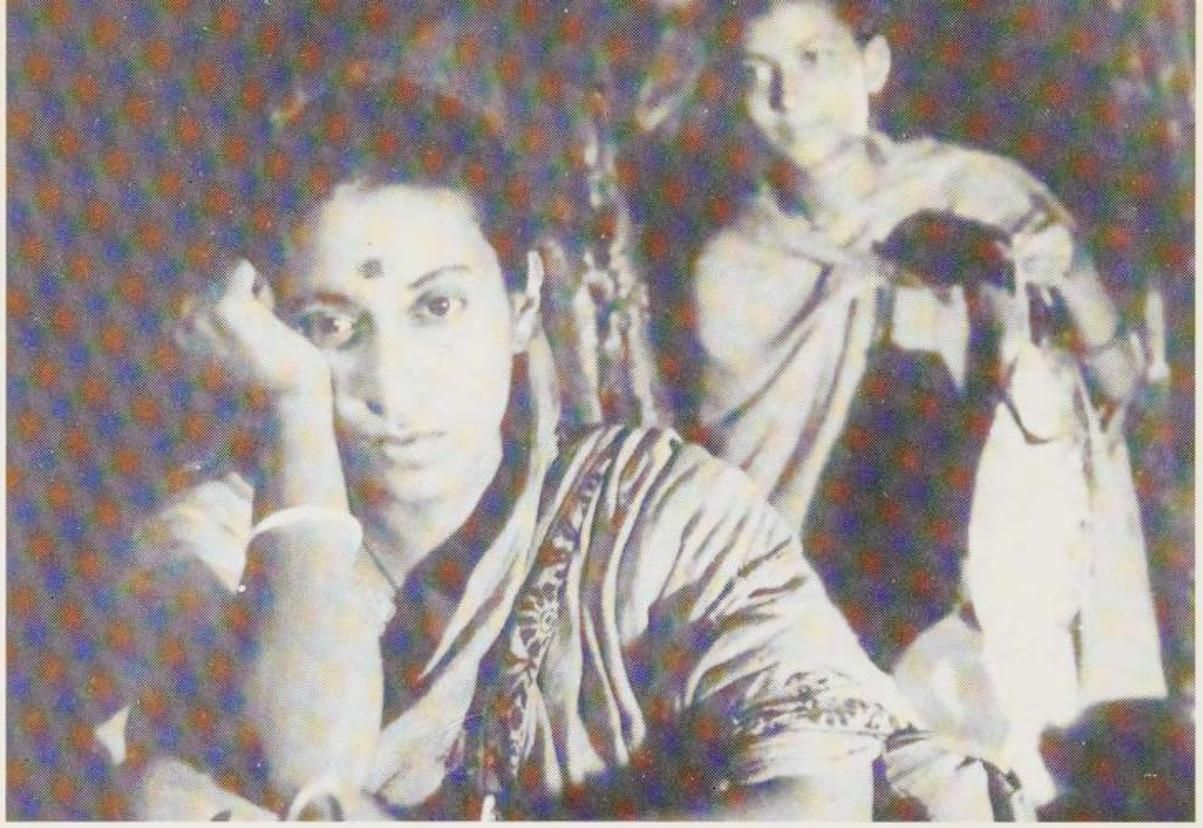
Sense in Nonsense—Satyajit Ray's latest film

Satyajit Ray's *Goopy Gyne* has not yet been released in Calcutta. There has been a delay. Based on a fairy story by his grandfather, Upendrakishore Ray, it is bound to evoke controversy as being totally unlike any of his other films. There will be debate as to whether it is a children's film—some people insist it is only this—or whether it is, in fact, an allegory directed against war and more topical by implication than any previous Ray film.

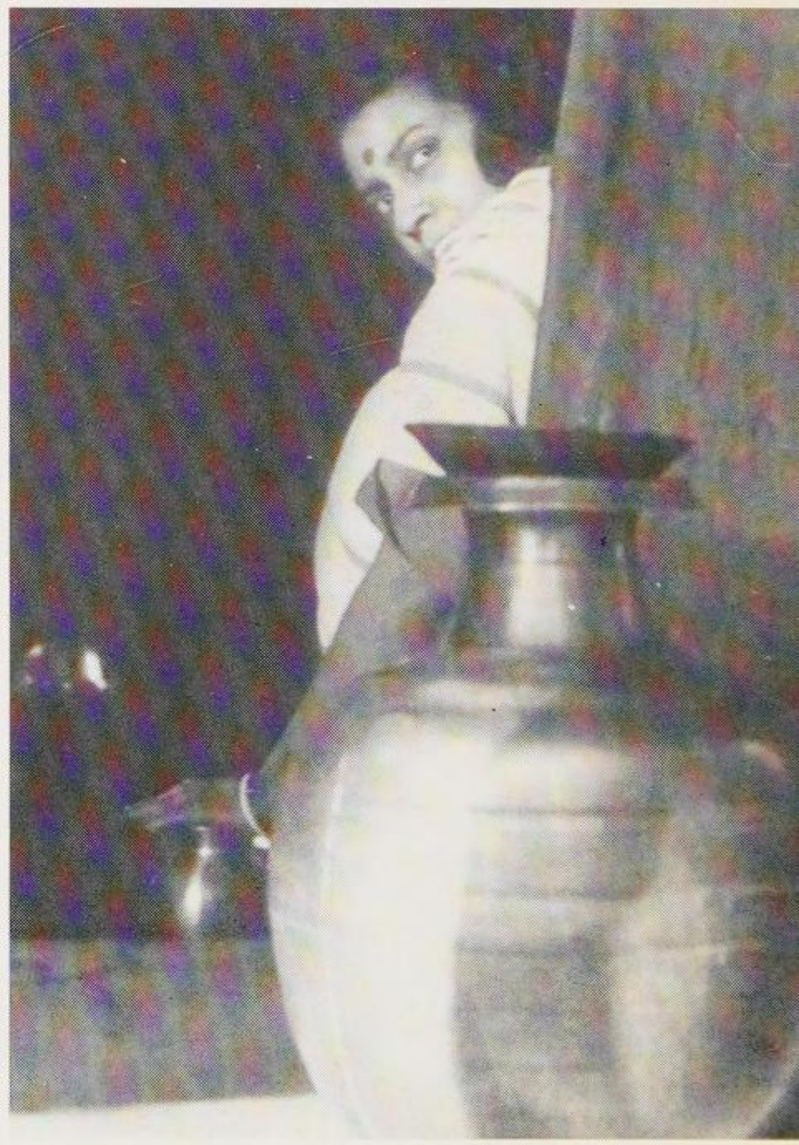
On the surface the story as such is certainly ideal for children. Goopy, who loves to sing but has no voice, is driven from his village having made a musical fool of himself. Somewhere in no man's land he meets Bagha, a drummer who cannot drum and has also been cast out of his village. A kindly King of the Ghosts finds the boys (in a most engaging sequence of unusual dancing) and bestows upon them a magic pair of slippers to carry them where they will. They wish to be musicians and, magically, they become most excellent. They need food and it suddenly appears.

So their adventuring begins, leading them to the Court of the Good King of Shundi, who in sympathy for his dumb subjects, acts dumb. Here they win a musical competition and soon they learn about the neighbouring Bad King of Halla, who wants to make war. So off they go to see if they can stop this foolish war.

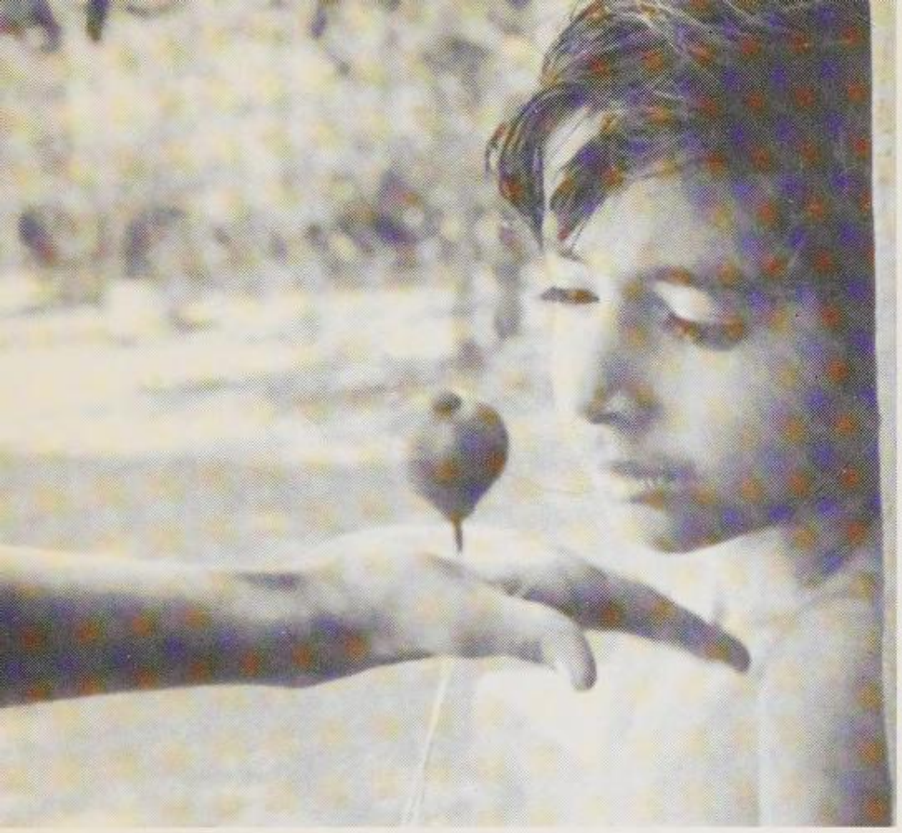
What they find is that in reality the Bad King is not so bad, except that his villainous Minister and the Magician feed him a drug which makes him very wild and warlike. His poor subjects are skinny and have no heart for war; but the war is being stirred up by the Villain.



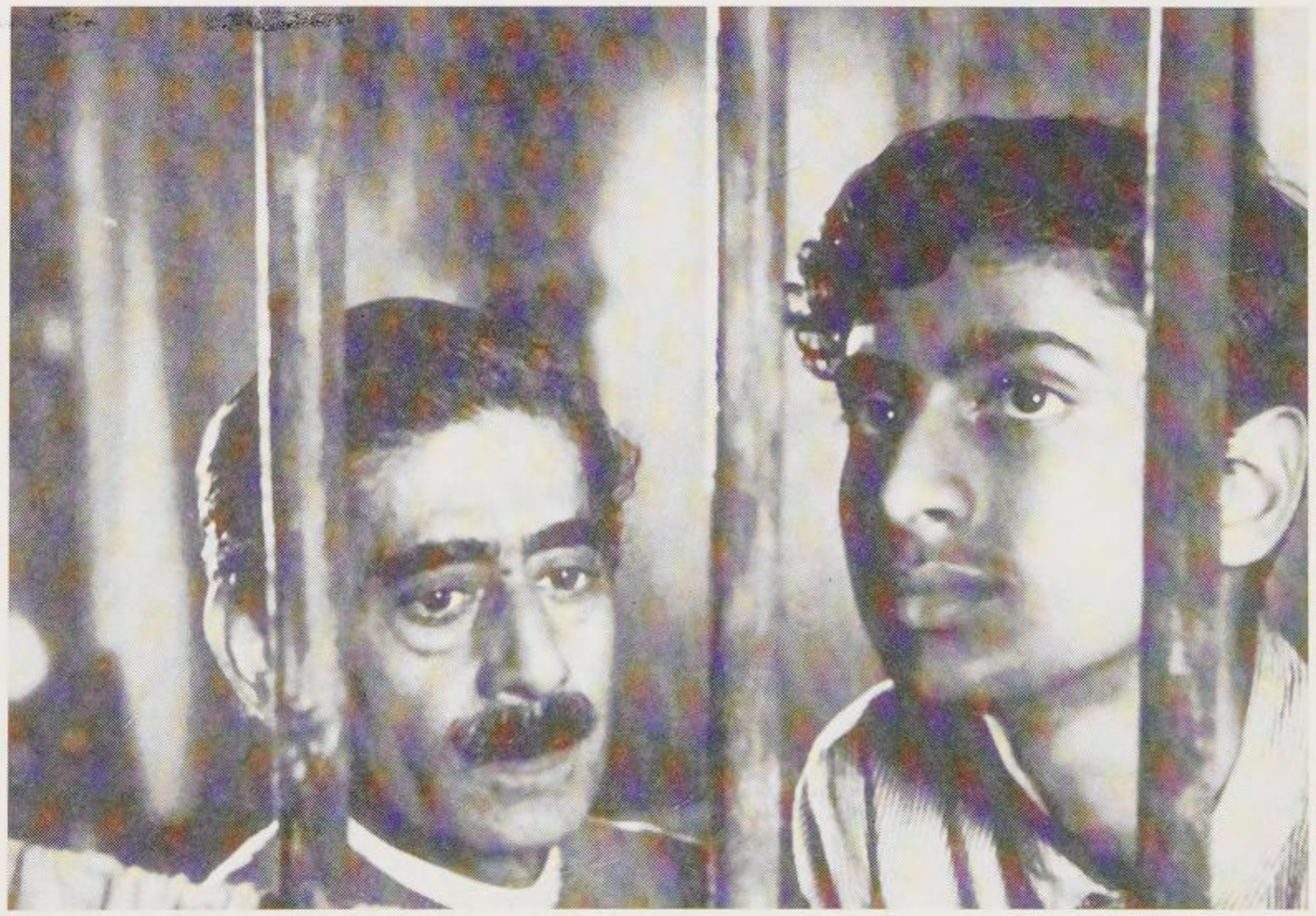
Pather Panchali



Top Left. Apu (Subir Banerjee) watches his first Jatra performance. Top Right. A brooding Sarbajaya (Karuna Banerjee) and a wondering Durga (Uma Dasgupta). Bottom Left. Durga offering a stolen fruit to Indir Thakrun (Chunibala Devi). Bottom Right. Sarbajaya, looking out of her kitchen.



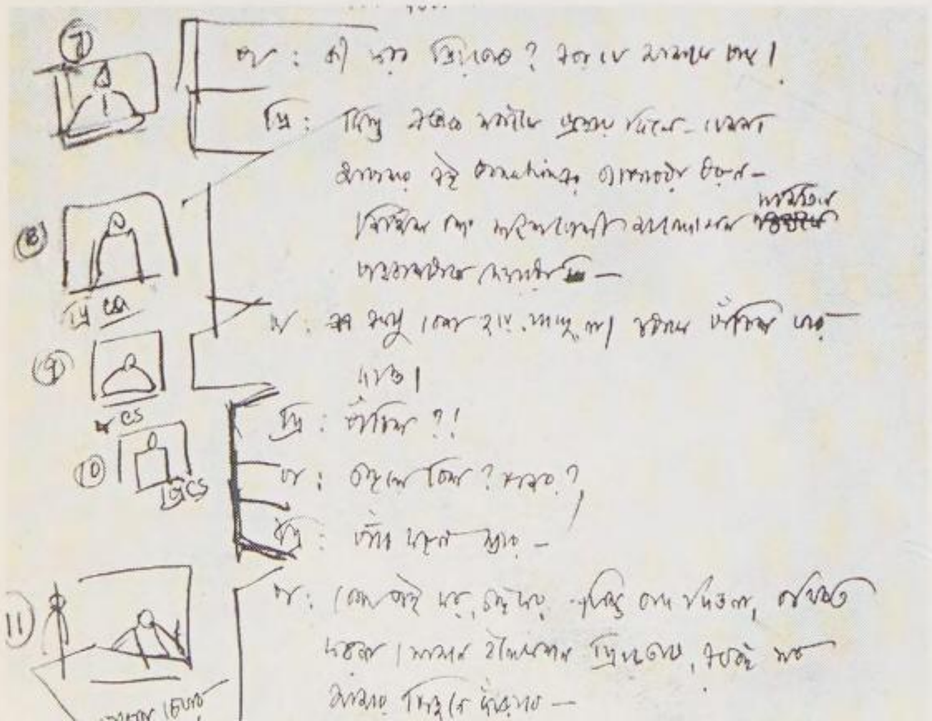
TOP LEFT. A shy Apu appreciates the skill of one of the village boys. TOP RIGHT. Durga takes care of the cow. BOTTOM LEFT. Tension between the two women — Sarbajaya and Indir Thakrun. BOTTOM RIGHT. One of those rare happy family scenes, with Sarbajaya, the little Durga (Runki Banerjee), and Harihar (Kanu Banerjee).

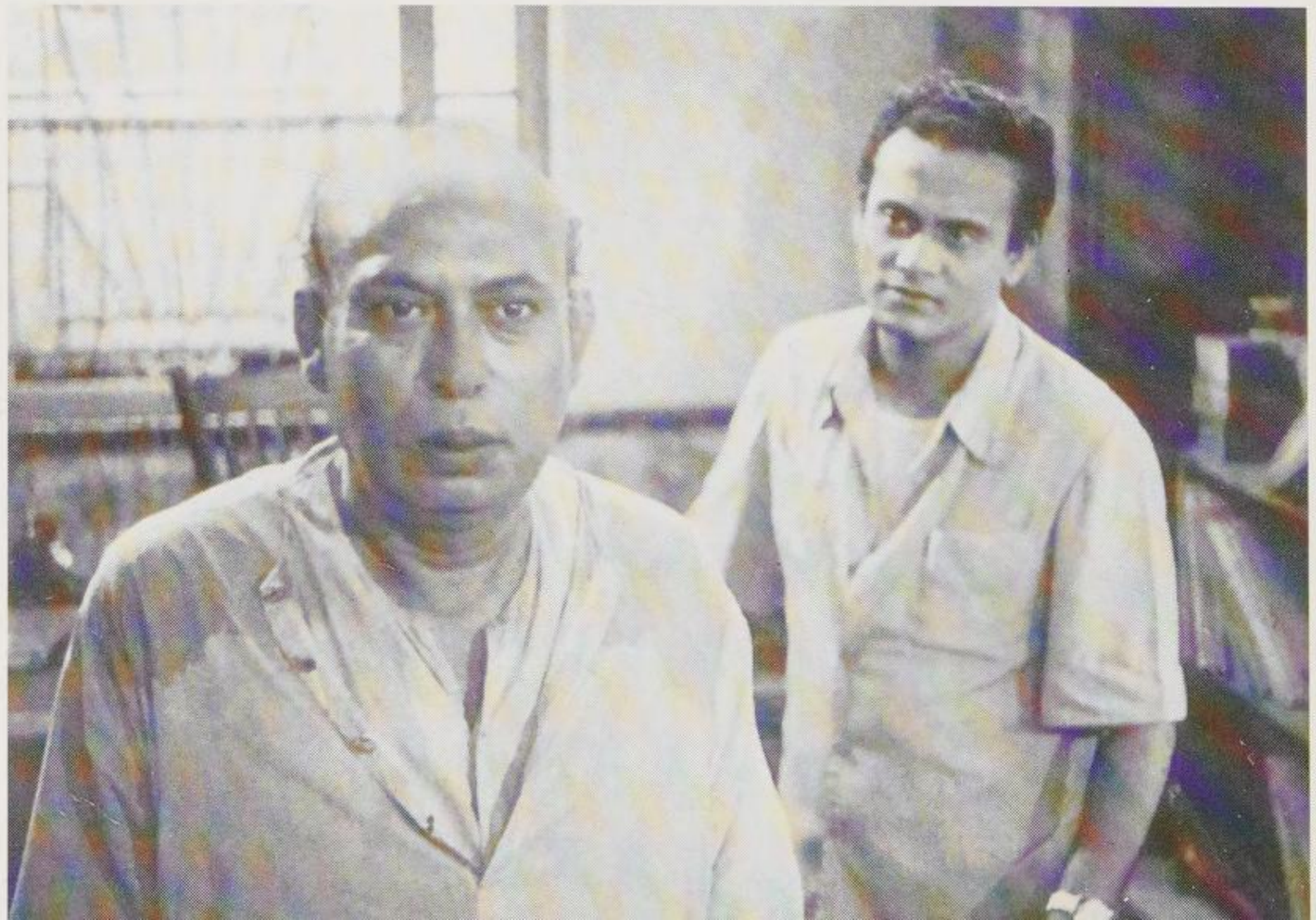


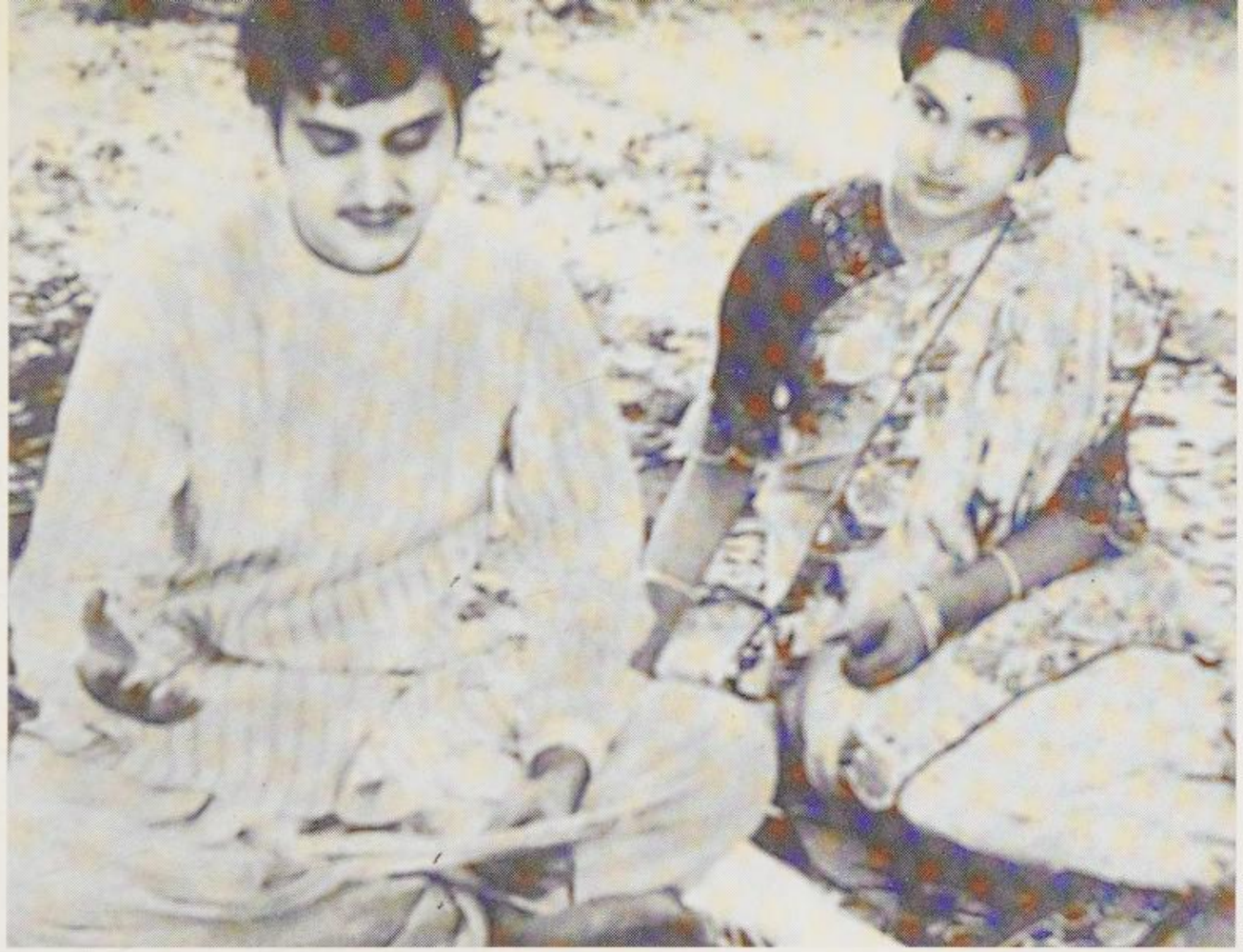
Top Left. A new and older Apu (Pinaki Sengupta) makes his entrance in the film. Top Right. The death of Harihar, with Sarbajaya giving him his last drop of water, and Apu watching. Bottom Left. Mother and son — Sarbajaya and Apu. Bottom Right. The kind and caring Headmaster (Subodh Ganguly) and the still older Apu (Smaran Ghoshal).

Parashpathar

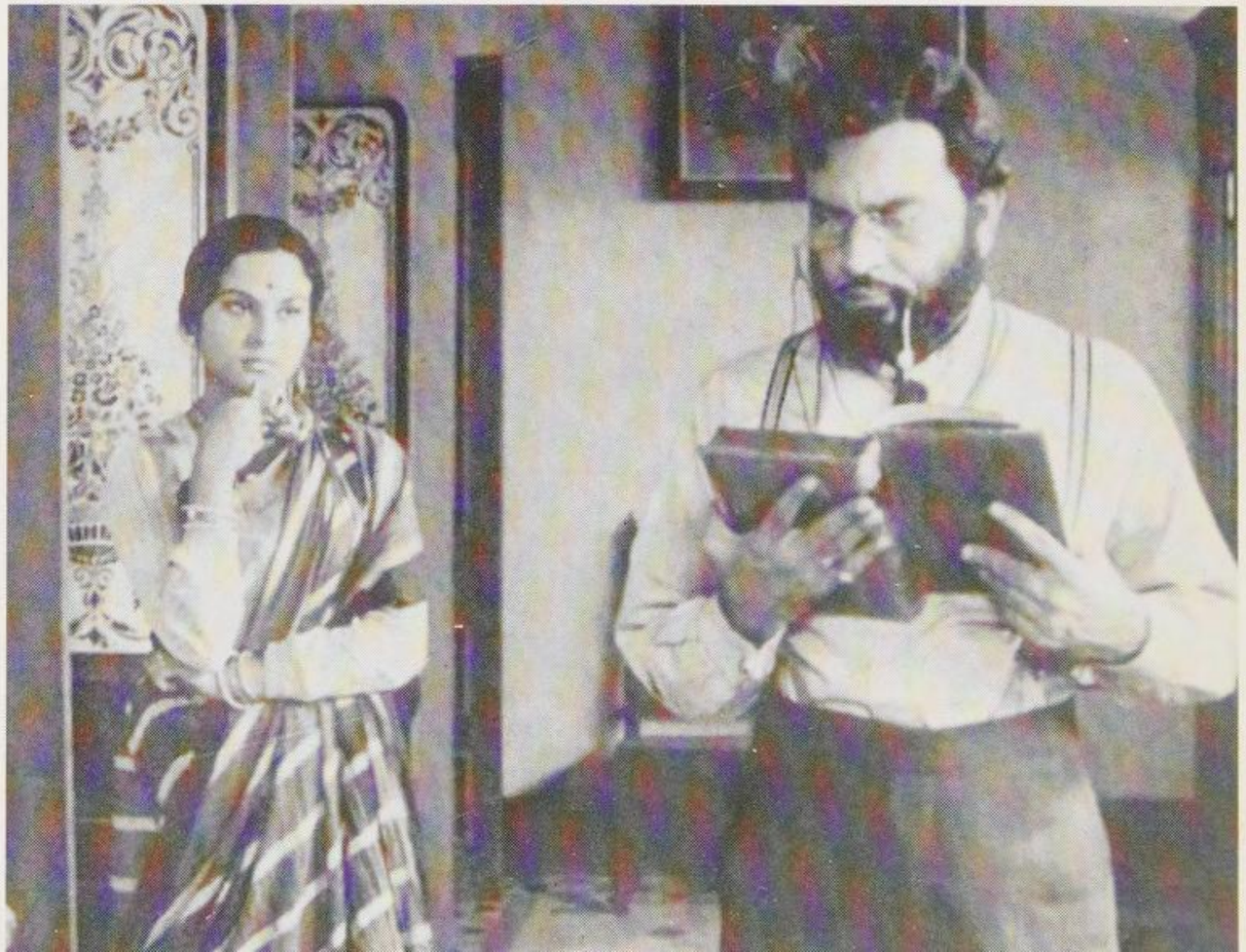
Top. Pareshchandra Datta (Tulsi Chakrabarty) and his wife (Ranibala); with a fragment of the shooting script.
Bottom. A fragment of the shooting script; and Pareshchandra Datta and Priyatosh Henry Biswas (Kali Banerjee).





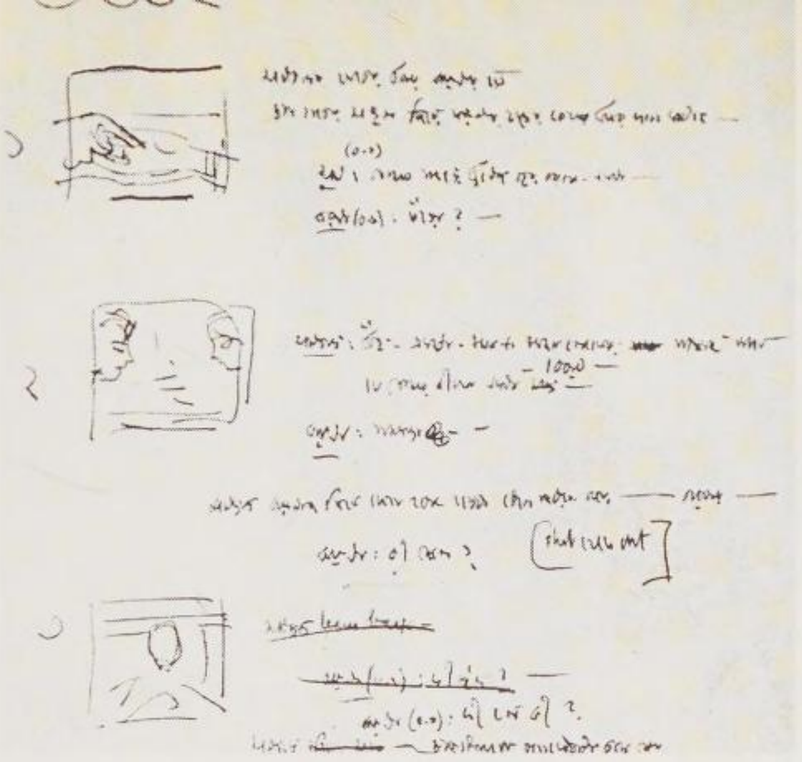


Charulatá

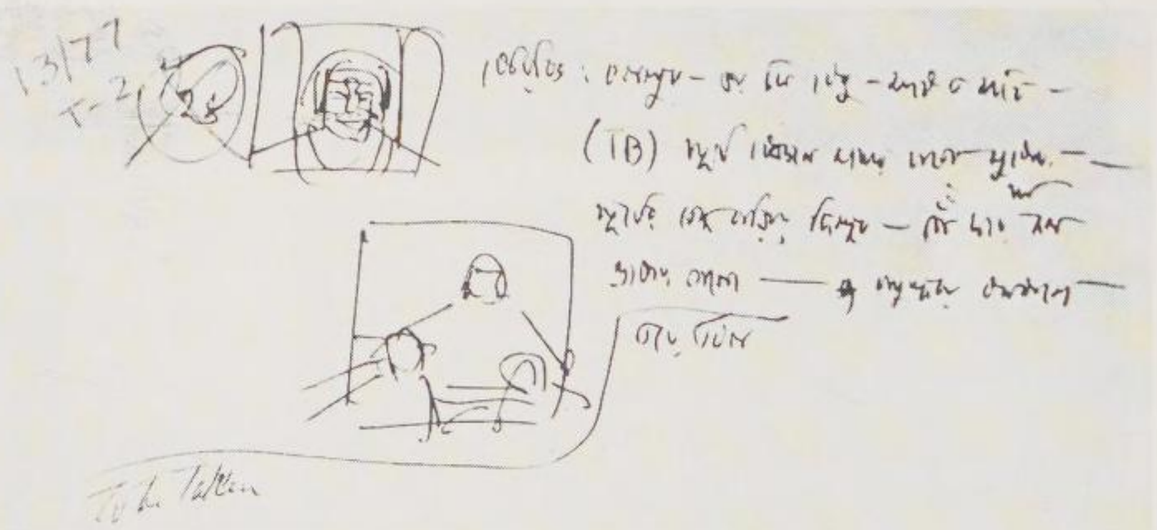


TOP LEFT. Amal (Soumitra Chatterjee) and Charu (Madhabi Mukherjee) — from literary companionship to love.
TOP RIGHT. Charu, the lonely woman looking at life through binoculars. BOTTOM. Charu, lonely wife of Bhupati (Shailen Mukherjee), the busy, committed, idealistic editor of *The Sentinel.*

Kapurush O Mahapurush

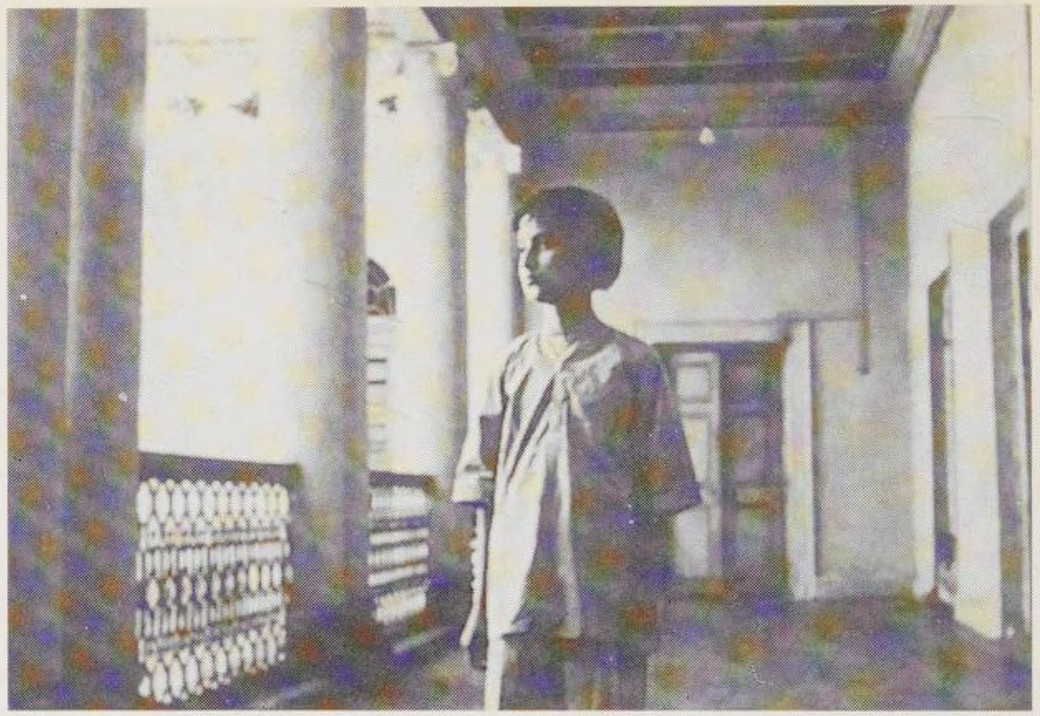


TOP. The restaurant scene in *Kapurush* — a fragment from the shooting script, and a shot from the scene, with Karuna (Madhabi Mukherjee) and Amitabha (Soumitra Chatterjee).
BOTTOM. Faces of Birinchi Baba, the Great Impostor (Charuprakash Ghosh), and his crony (Robi Ghosh), in *Mahapurush*, with a fragment of the shooting script; the Bottom Right still, courtesy Nemai Ghosh.



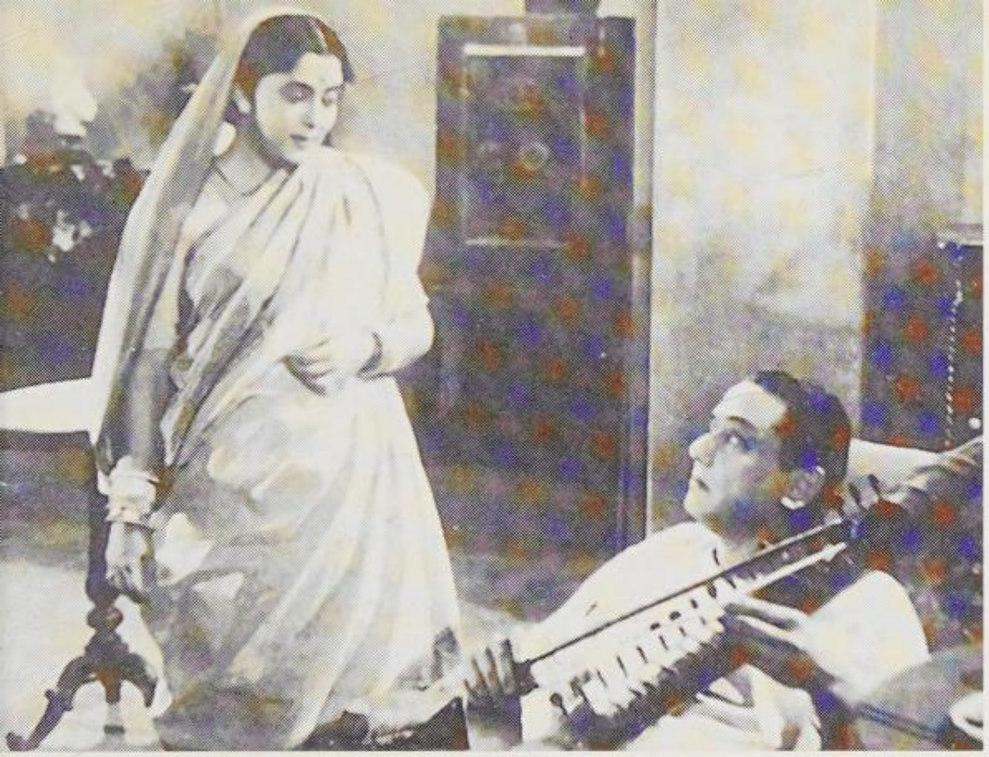
Nayak

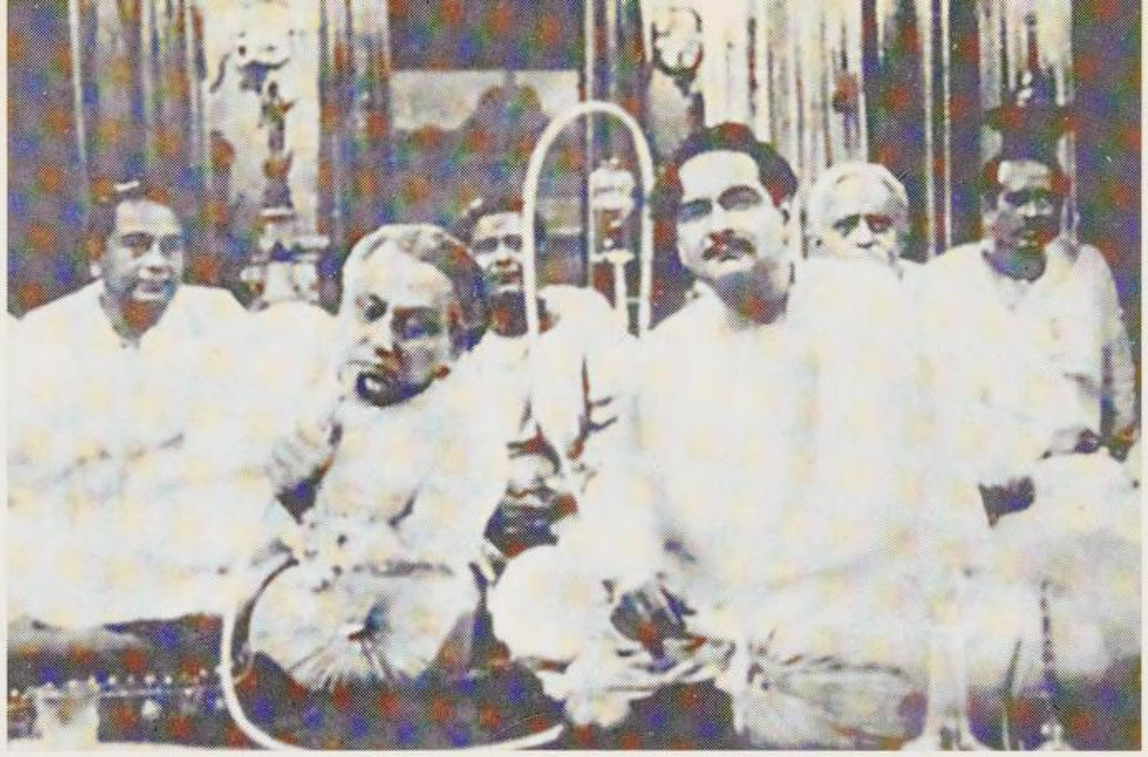
Top Left. Arindam, the star hero (Uttam Kumar), with Biresh (Premangshu Bose), his trade unionist friend from the past.
Top Right. Arindam, with Aditi (Sharmila Tagore), the probing but understanding journalist.
Bottom Right. Arindam and Aditi in the dining car in the train to Delhi.

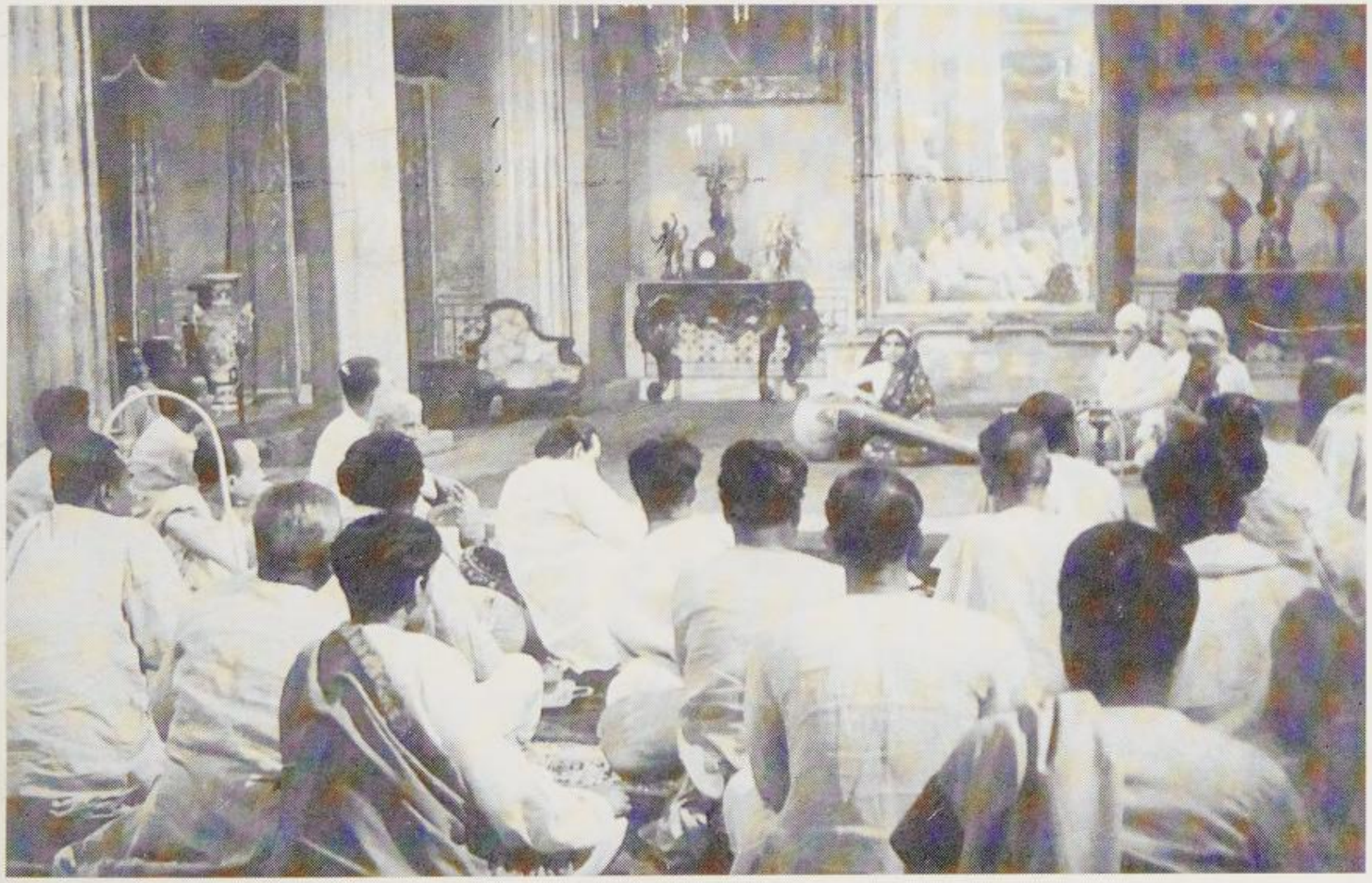


The Documentaries

TOP LEFT. *Bala* : Balasaraswati training/teaching a *shishya*. Still by Nemai Ghosh.
TOP RIGHT. *Rabindranath Tagore* : The poet as a child.
BOTTOM LEFT. *Rabindranath Tagore* : The poet as a young pupil. Courtesy : Nemai Ghosh.
BOTTOM RIGHT. *The Inner Eye* : The blind painter Binodebehari Mukherjee. Still by Nemai Ghosh.

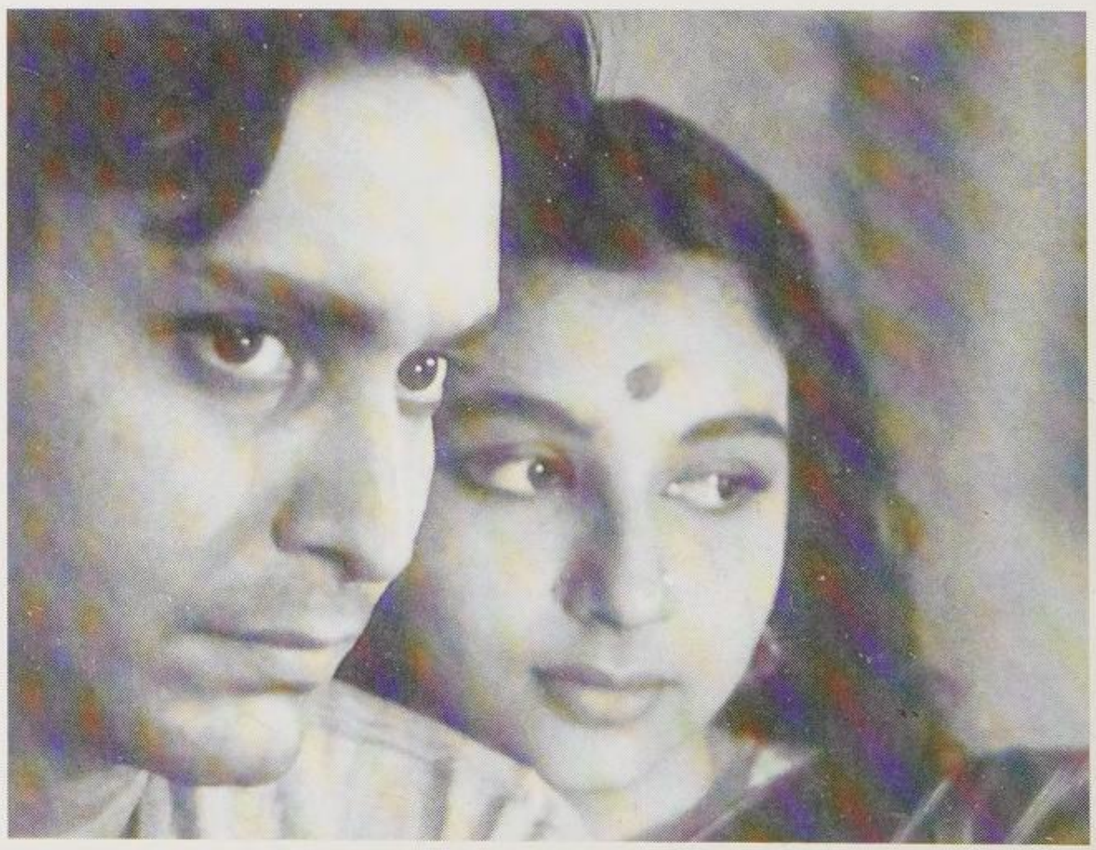


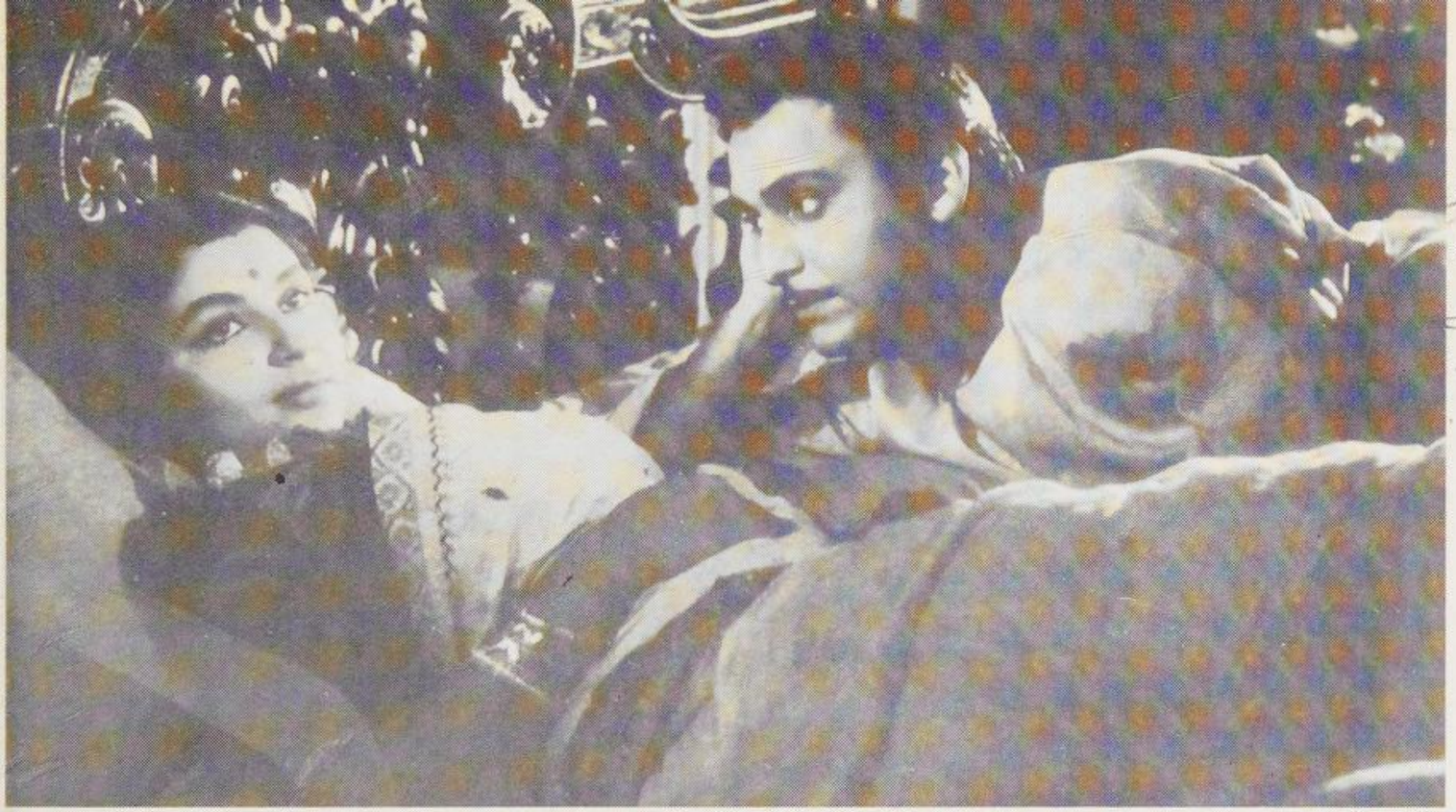


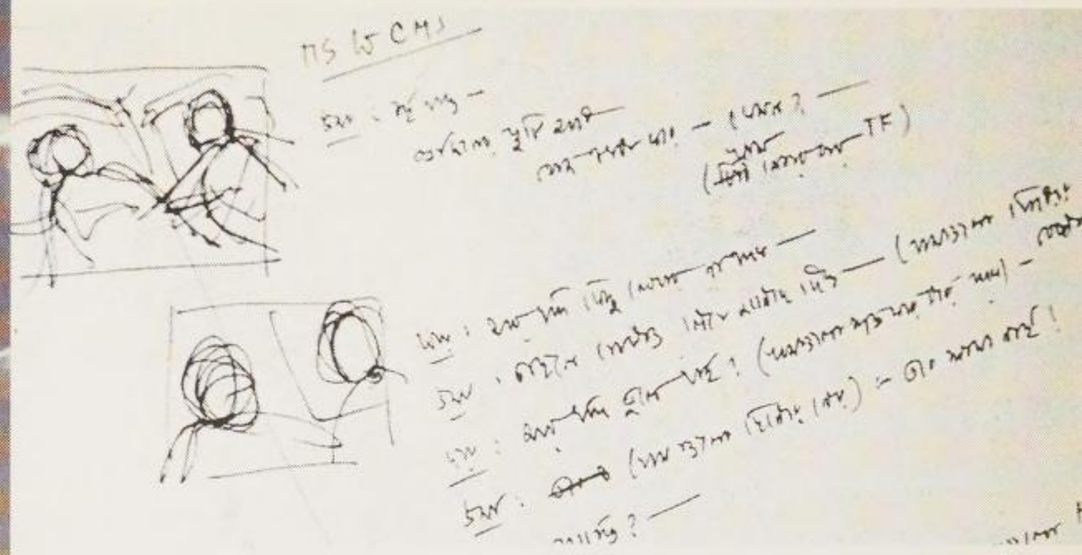


TOP LEFT. Bishwambhar Roy (Chhabi Biswas), in the long flashback, with his wife, Mahamaya (Padma Devi) : Mahamaya asks for leave to go to her mother.
TOP RIGHT. Bishwambhar Roy, with his nouveau riche rival, Mahim Ganguly (Gangapada Bose), at one of his concerts. BOTTOM LEFT. A concert in the music hall.
BOTTOM RIGHT. Bishwambhar Roy decked up in his traditional attire; with a page from the filmscript in facsimile.

Top Left. Pulu's aunt (Shefalika – Putul) finishes decorating Aparna's (Sharmila Tagore) face for the wedding. Top Right. Apu (Soumitra Chatterjee) and his son Kajal (Alok Chakravarty) — at the end of the film. Bottom Left. Kajal, with his mask lifted. Bottom Right. Apu and Aparna — newly wed.

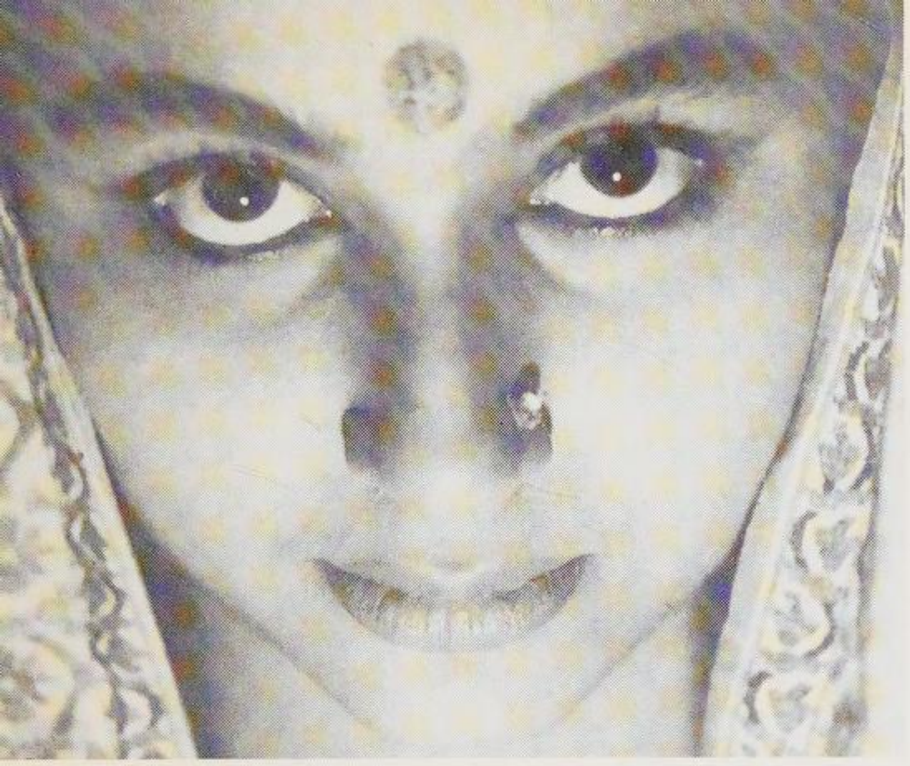




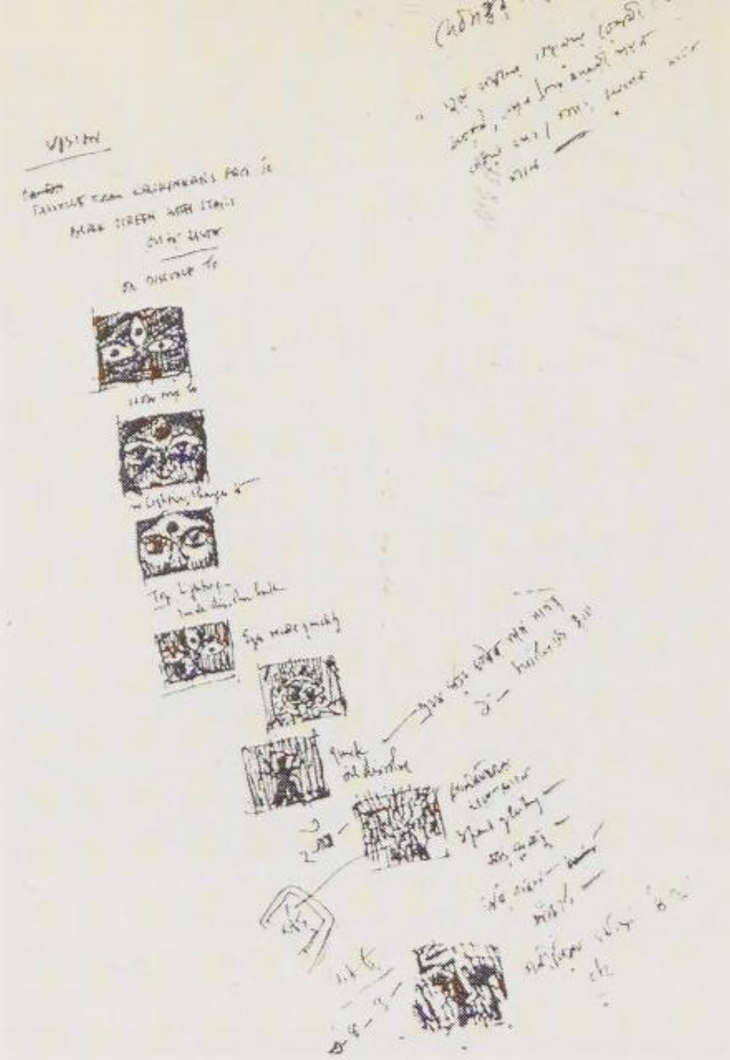


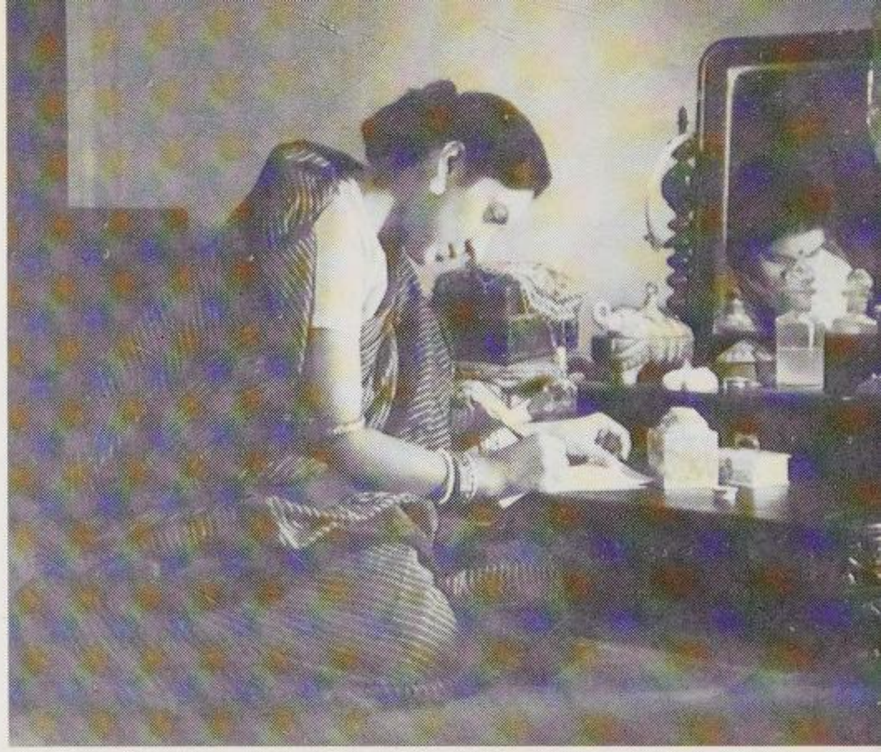
TOP LEFT. Dayamayee and Umaprasad. TOP RIGHT. Fragments from the shooting script. BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT. Kalikinkar and Dayamayee, Dayamayee alone, Umaprasad and Dayamayee — stages in the dissolution of a faith.

Devi



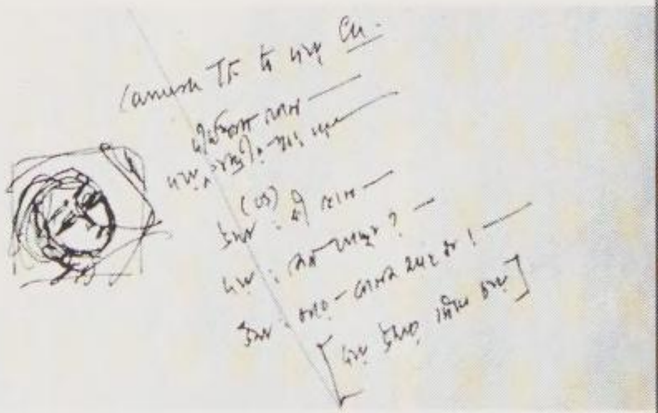
armila Tagore as Dayamayee, the young housewife
rned 'goddess'.



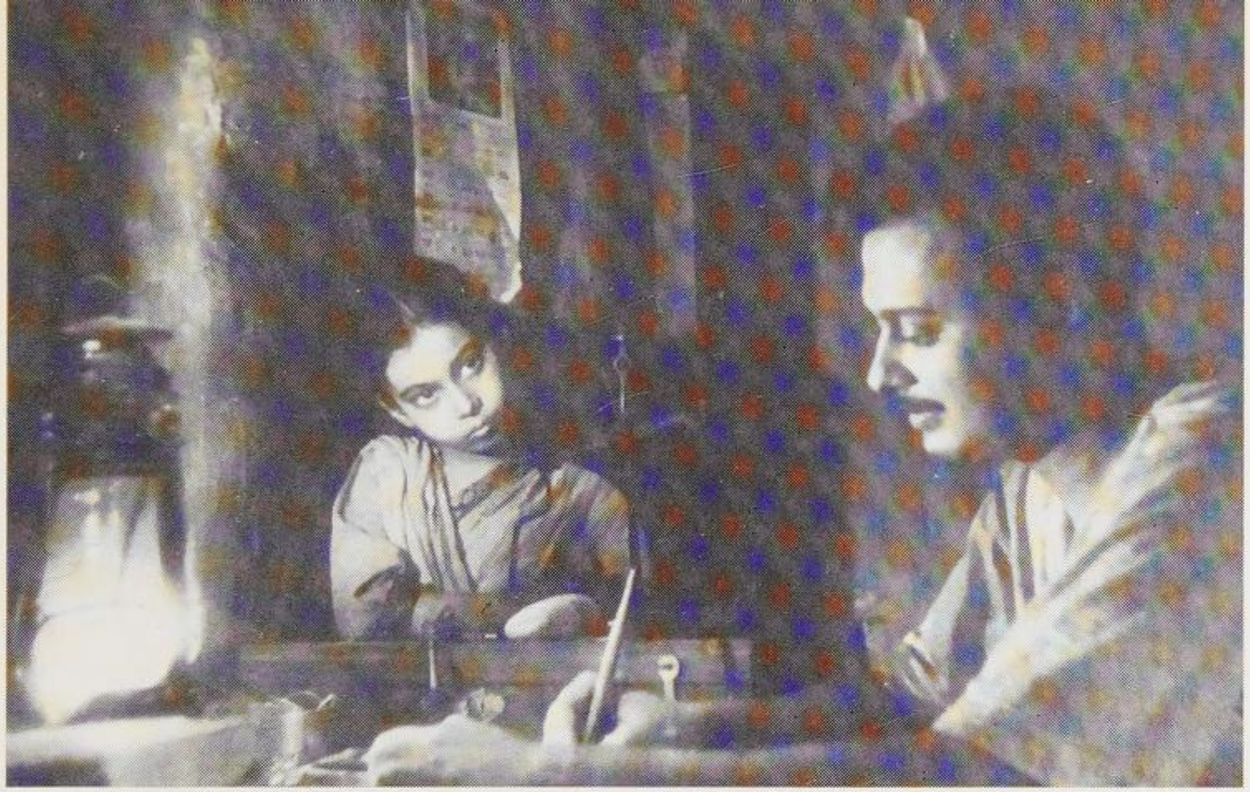


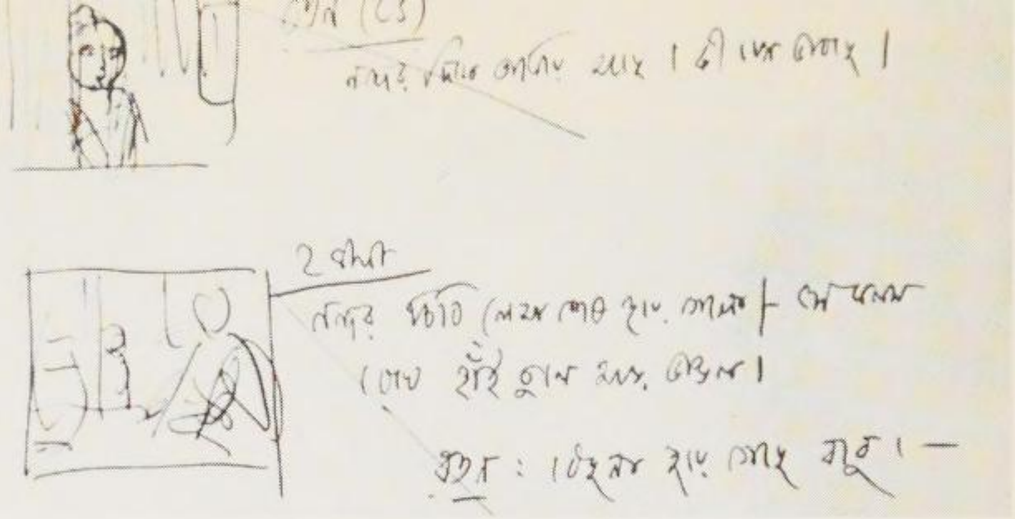
Harasundari (Karuna Banerjee), her sceptical sister-i
law, writing to Umaprasad, Dayamayee's husband,
telling him of the 'transformation'.

BOTTOM LEFT. Nibaran (Muhammad Israil), bringing his sick child to be cured by the 'goddess'. BOTTOM RIGHT. Kaliki
Roy (Chhabi Biswas), the worshipful father-in-law 'adoring' the 'goddess.' Fragments of the shooting script run thro
the middle of the page.



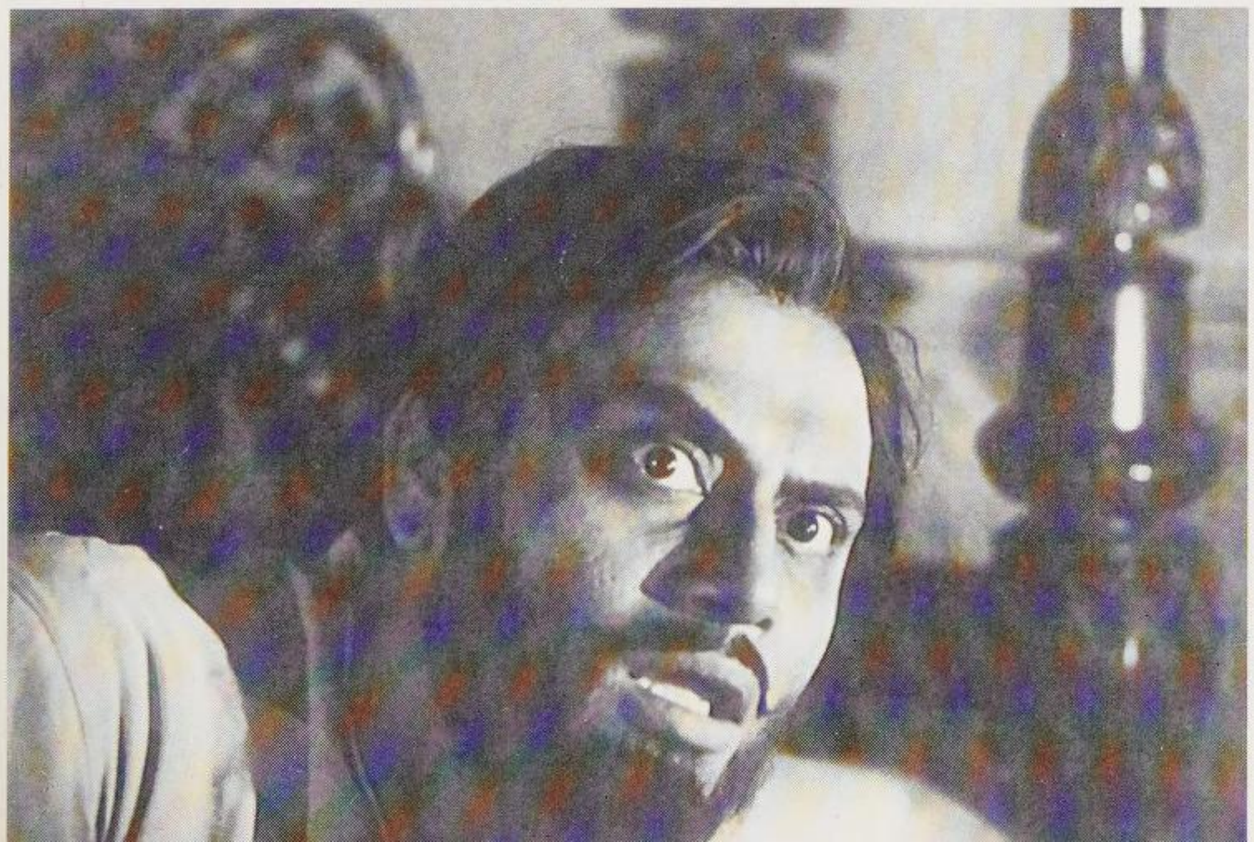
Devi

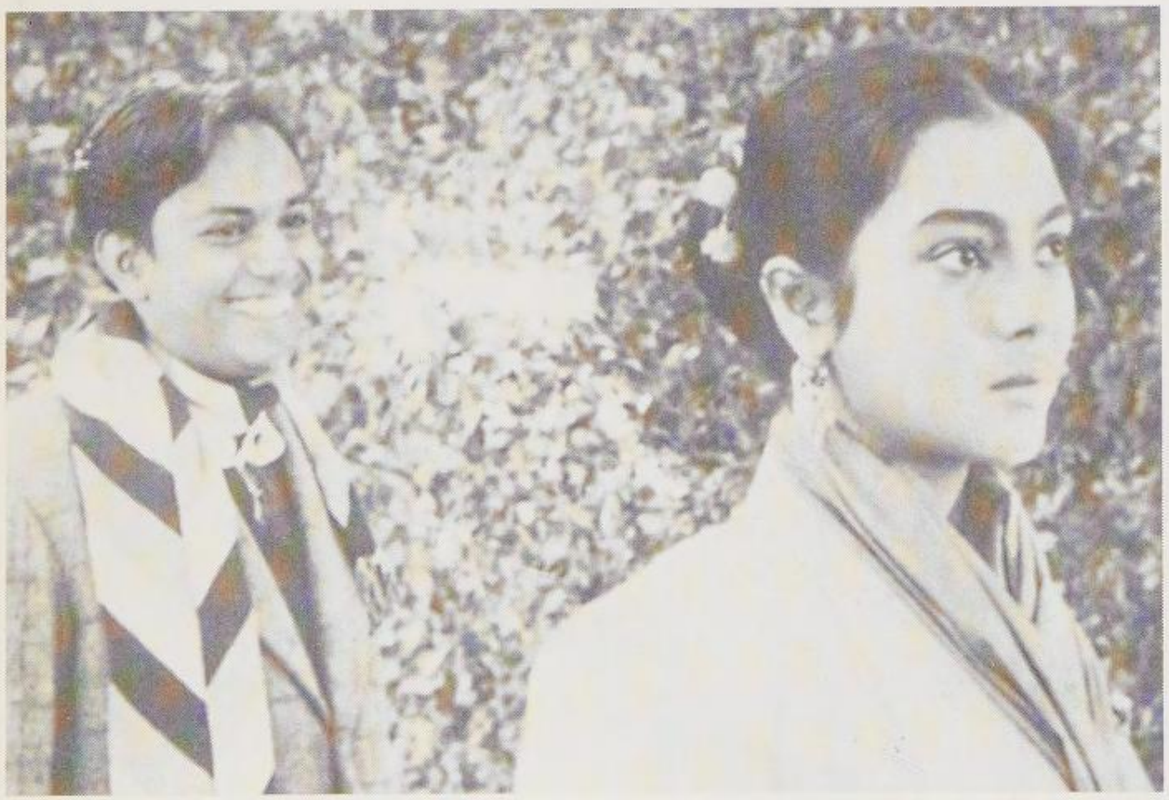




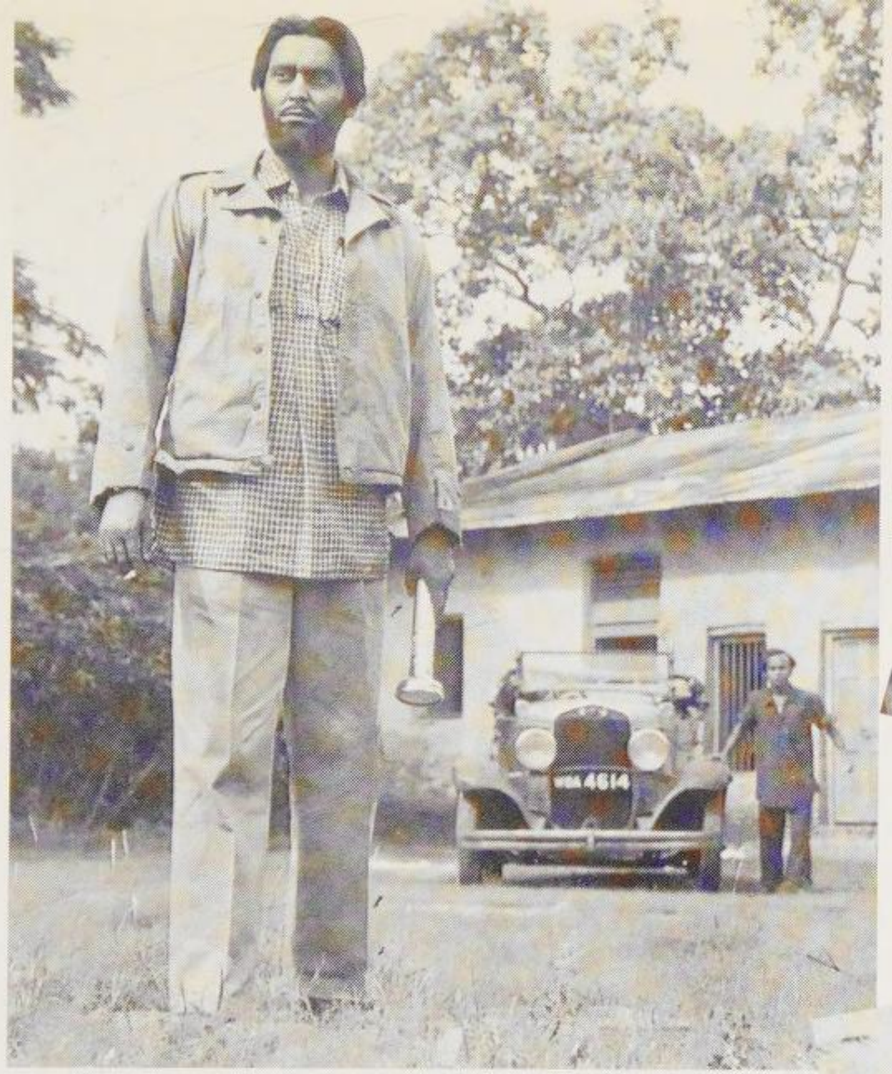
Teen Kanya

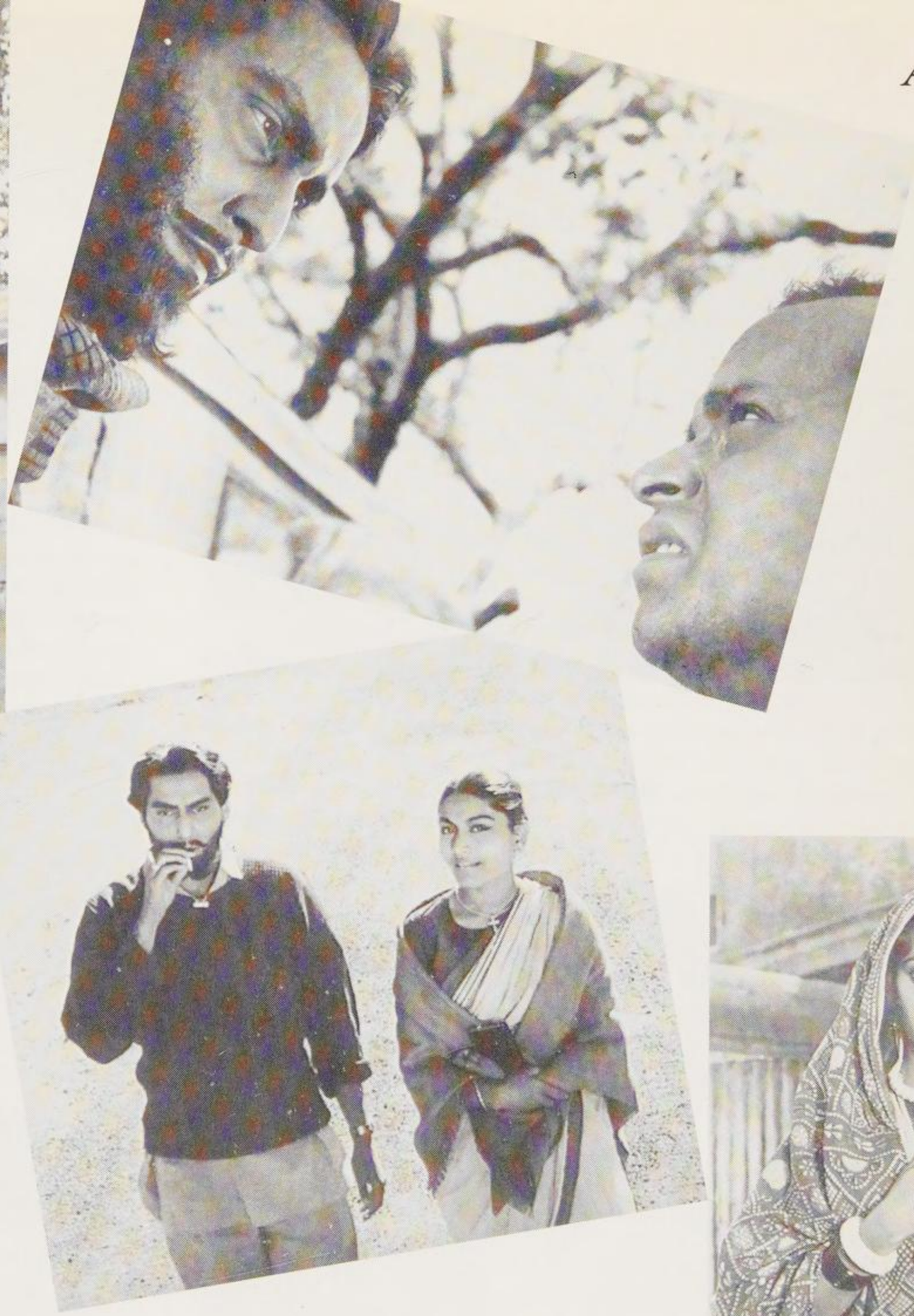
TOP LEFT. A scene from *Postmaster*, with Ratan (Chandana Banerjee) finding a friend in the Postmaster Nandalal (Anil Chatterjee), loners both.
BOTTOM LEFT. Phanibhushan (Kali Banerjee), horrorstruck, in *Monihara*.
RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM. A fragment from the *Postmaster* shooting script; Mrinmoyee (Aparna Sen, nèe Dasgupta), still wild and untamed, in *Samapti*; and a fragment of the *Samapti* script.

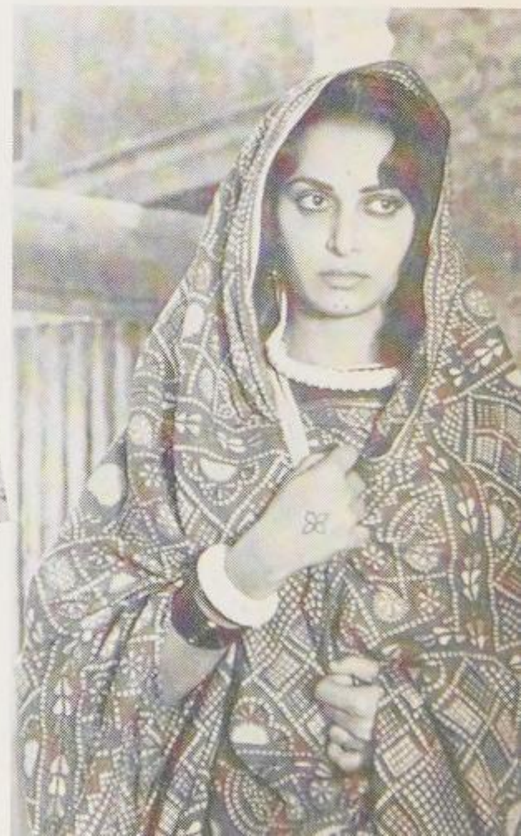




TOP LEFT. Jagadish (Pahari Sanyal), the birdwatcher, tells Ashok (Arun Mukherjee) of the plight of the birds endangered by nuclear tests. BOTTOM LEFT. Ashok finds a friend in Maneesha (Alaknanda Roy). ABOVE. Labanyaprabha (Karuna Banerjee), who finds her voice in Darjeeling.



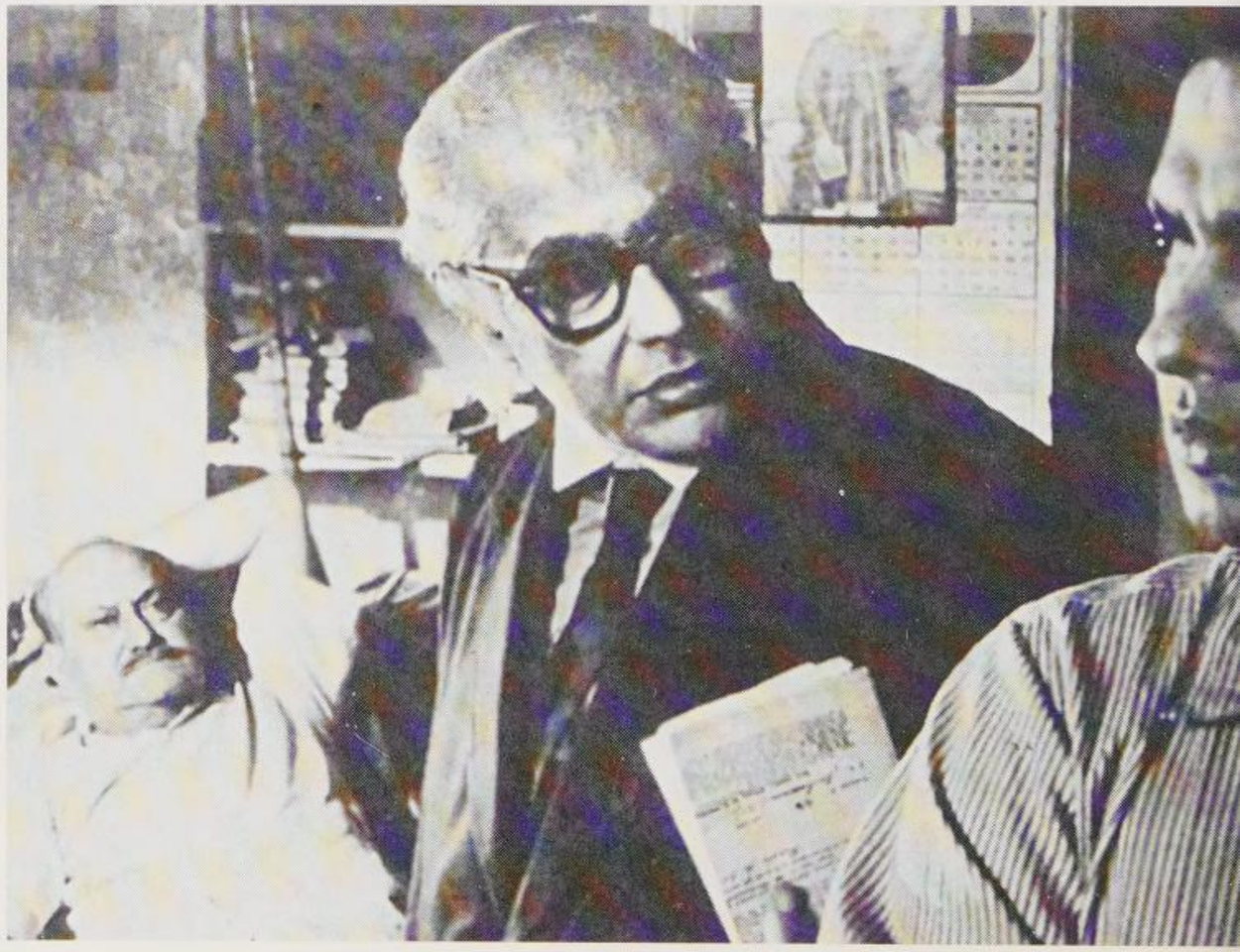




CLOCKWISE. Narsingh, the proud taxi-driver (Soumitra Chatterjee), with his vintage Chrysler; with his assistant Rama (Robi Ghosh); Gulabi (Waheeda Rehman), a Bombay star in a Ray film for the first time — with her charm and delicacy; Narsingh, with Neeli (Ruma Guhathakurta), the Catholic schoolmistress.

TOP LEFT. Arati (Madhabi Mukherjee) and Subrata (Anil Chatterjee), the cou
trying to understand one another. TOP RIGHT. The couple, with Bani (Jaya
Bhaduri), the husband's sister. BOTTOM LEFT. Tension in the office — centr
on an Anglo-Indian colleague, Edith (Vicky Redwood).
BOTTOM RIGHT. The father (Haren Chatterjee), the father-in-law
(Sailen Ganguly) and Subrata. The Bottom Left still by courtesy Nemai Gho

Mahanagar



It is now that they boys' power for magic becomes a matter of life or death. Their music will come to the rescue for when they sing the would-be savage Hallajans are simply immobilized and cannot move.

And then it all turns out that the Bad King in his good natural self is really the brother of the thoroughly Good King. Each has a daughter to bestow in thanks upon the boys who have kept the peace and, presumably, everyone will live happily ever after.

Even the most detailed synopsis cannot possibly convey the character of this very unique film which belongs to no category and has not been duplicated in style in India or anywhere else. The only film which in some way combines similar ingredients of adventure, music, magic, humour, satire and philosophy is the long cartoon, *Yellow Submarine,* inspired and produced by the Beatles.

Yet the two films are worlds apart except that they can capture the same response from those who are receptive to the sense that nonsense makes. Ray's is a film for addicts of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear, those writers for grown-up children. It calls for letting go of staid and preconceived ideas as to what is an intelligent film. This outward fairy tale is very sharp in its fun-making as to Power and Idealism unconsciously and charmingly represented by the two musical boys with their inventiveness on behalf of good.

The overall impression that *Goopy Gyne and Bagha Byne* makes is that it is a film which everyone concerned enormously enjoyed making. Even a moment of thought must make it evident that to create a fairy tale on the screen is a very difficult undertaking because of the danger that what will appear will be artificial whimsy, arbitrary magic tricks and forced humour.

The most striking aspect of Ray's experiment is that he fashions a world of some unspecified date, draws one into it and makes one believe in its validity in the same way as one believes in the validity of the realistic lives he has previously created upon the screen. To create a fantastic world which at the same time is a natural world of its own reveals a very high degree of sensitive imagination. It is the absence of falsity which makes this odd film a work of art.

Technically, except for a few shots of camels which are not wholly effective, *Goopy Gyne* is as brilliant in execution as *Charulata*. The most striking sequence is the Dance of the Ghosts, four sets of ghosts including the precise and absurd English ghosts and the professional ghosts in their balloon like costumes. Shafts of satire gleam out. Tonally, too, the rhythmic distortion of the King of the Ghosts' speech with its meaning clothed in gibberish sound is just perfect, if one is to believe in his magic gift of three boons and two pairs of winged slippers.

This is Ray's first musical film—the music is his own—as opposed to his use of background music. His songs are all integrated into the total texture and frequently it is the words that carry the underlying philosophic level.

In *Kanchenjunga,* there were hints of humour in one of his musical passages. Here one of the most delightful sequences is the musical contest in the palace of the Good King of Shundi, where Ray gently satirizes the classical mannerisms of the contesting musicians from far and wide. Not unnaturally, his casting of those interpreting the musicians is superb in its underlying humour.

No doubt there will be those who may object to a little fun being made at the expense of the classicists. Everyone has a personal bias in their reaction to music and in this film Ray shows a musical volatility not previously evident. Musically it appears a *tour de force.*

Originally conceived to be made in colour (only the very last moments are) the whole has been most successfully reconceived in black and white. The sets are exceptional in the clean-cut visual quality. For example, the predominance of white with black patterning for the happy palace of Shundi, and the ferocious motifs which dominate the villain-ridden Halla where the wicked Magician, with the diamond patterned robe and spectacles, brews his potions in a den marvellously decorated with compelling objects of his trade.

There are memorable moments when the strongest realism emerges : Goopy driven out of his village riding a pathetic donkey along an arid path; the expression that suddenly descends upon the face of the first dumb inhabitant of Shundi after he has offered the boys two apples and he cannot explain the people's predicament; and the servility of the mean-bodied Spy who seems to embody all the species of informers.

Ray has extracted a very outstanding performance by Santosh Dutt playing the dual characters of the brother-kings. One is forced to believe in the good nature of the King of Halla—a pacific soul —the victim of a devilish plot of bewitchment. An extraordinary blend of pathos and savagery is achieved which makes one think that here, in a fairy tale, there is embedded a portrait of the real men of Destiny who beguiled by evil Ministers have brought about real executions and wars.

The teaming as the boys of Robi Ghosh, as the tougher Bagha, and of Tapen Chatterjee, as Goopy, is very effective. Perhaps it is the set of his teeth, which appear to smile, that makes the latter look so engaging first in his foolishness and later in his idealism.

And Chatterjee uses his long body with an enchanted grace and sings as if he were really singing. His performance is illuminated by a delicate comic poetry that now and then becomes lyrical, as when he sings beautifully for the first time the morning Raga.

There are some individually exquisite shots in the film—the boys suddenly arriving on a snow-covered hillside (the shot was taken near Simla), and the evening shot on the roof of the Shundi Palace where the worried Good King confides to the boys and they swear they will stop the war from happening.

It will be a great pity if the oddity of this film restricts its distribution and appreciation of it. Once before Satyajit Ray attempted fantasy. This was in his early film, *Parashpathar*, which has never received the attention it deserves, for this, too, is a very unique film. Ray has shown courage in carrying through his intent to make his grandfather's story into a film that defies classification. It is to be hoped that its originality will be fully studied when it is shown at the Berlin Film Festival and not harnessed to the category of a film exclusively for children.

MARIE SETON
Times of India, Mumbai 1969

Aranyer Din-Ratri

1 India Unrest in Satyajit Ray Film

'Days and Nights in the Forest' (at the Los Feliz starting Wednesday) is part of a new trilogy of films on contemporary life in India by Satyajit Ray.

Unlike the films of the director's famed Apu trilogy, 'Days and Nights in the Forest' and another instalment, 'The Adversary', which was shown recently at the Theater Vanguard, are linked only thematically and are deeply introspective rather than epic in scope. Both films deal with a current of unrest running through modern India.

Based on a novel by Sunil Ganguly, 'Days and Nights in the Forest' tells of four men, all on the brink of middle age, who take a trip to the country after one of them (Samit Bhanja), a star cricket player, has been jilted by his girl.

Back to Nature . Stifled by the rules and regulations of their daily life in the city, they experience a vague desire to get back to nature and to enjoy a sense of freedom.

In order to reveal his quartet both to us and to themselves, Ray has taken a rigorously indirect approach that pays off powerfully at the finish but makes for some frankly tedious passages. Instead of endowing his people with vivid, easily identifiable personalities Ray makes us get to know them ever so slowly—as in real life.

What emerges gradually and subtly—and not without humour—is a portrait of four men whose destinies are fixed absolutely. Self-indulgent, bourgeois to the core, callous in regard to the country people whom they exploit incessantly, they are gnawingly vulnerable —and therefore human.

Two Women. The key event is their encounter with two beautiful women (Sharmila Tagore, Kaberi Bose) who are vacationing at a family estate. The situation is fraught with possibilities—but it is clear that the sheer weight of formal tradition and obligations will prevent any relationship materializing between any of the men and the women.

At once reminiscent of Chekhov in its juxtaposition of humour and despair and of Antonioni in its sense of eloquently expressed malaise, 'Days and Nights in the Forest' is a bleakly beautiful, thoroughly unrelenting film by an acknowledged master.

KEVIN THOMAS
Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles1973

2 Fine India Film in Chekhov Vein

Another fine example of Satyajit Ray's craftsmanship will be unveiled at the Film Festival tomorrow night when 'Days and Nights in the Forest' is scheduled in the early spot, at 7 p.m.

I want to call your attention to this charming and wonderfully involving film, which I saw at an advance screening, since Ray's work generally draws a disappointing crowd at the festival (Indian films not being box office) and they rarely come back for a regular run.

His new movie is as subtle and thoughtful as anything India's foremost director has done, though it's rather different from his previous work, in that it's distinctly Chekhovian in mood and feeling.

Ray based his script on a story by Sunil Ganguly and it's a languid, almost uneventful contemporary tale about four young men (but not too young) from the middle class, who drive from Calcutta to the forest of Palamau for a week's holiday.

The friends are quite dissimilar. One's a jabbering clown. Another's a sullen and handsome athlete. And the other two are bland but affable fellows who chance to meet a pair of attractive, vacationing females whom they attempt to woo.

Much of the film unfolds as a social comedy, with the men housed together in a Forest Service rest cottage, which they commandeer without official permission. 'Thank God for corruption,' says one of them after they've slipped some money to a reluctant caretaker, who lets them stay.

The women are part of a well-to-do family that lives nearby. Their boredom at being in the country, their curiosity about the four men and their efforts to start up a friendship are what makes the story so reminiscent of Chekhov.

It's also present in the curiously old-fashioned attitude of these people, who sit around on the lawn playing a memory game (using names like Mao Tse-tung and Cleopatra) and who flirt with a discretion that might almost be called Victorian.

The men are so timid, they're embarrassed to be seen drunk or bathing (in swimming trunks) by the women.

Only the athlete ventures forth to seduce a peasant girl in the forest, for which he's brutally repaid when a villager clubs him over the head and steals his wallet.

The last incident constitutes the single piece of action to interrupt the film's serenity. The unhurried tempo may bother a few of you. But Ray's insight, precision and gift for little details (a quick look in the mirror before one of the men leaves the house to receive a call from the ladies) will keep most of you fairly absorbed, if not thoroughly engaged.

STANLEY EICHELBAUM

San Francisco Examiner, San Francisco 1970

3

'It adds years to your life,' the young men from Calcutta in Satyajit Ray's 'Days and Nights in the Forest' say of the country quiet, and it's easy to believe. Ray's images are so emotionally saturated that they become suspended in time and, in some cases, fixed forever. Satyajit Ray's films can give rise to a more complex feeling of happiness in me than the work of any other director. I think it must be because our involvement with his characters is so direct that we are caught up in a blend of the fully accessible and the inexplicable, the redolent, the mysterious. We accept the resolutions he effects not merely as resolutions of the stories but as truths of human experience. Yet it isn't only a matter of thinking, Yes, this is the way it is. What we assent to is only a component of the pattern of associations in his films; to tell the stories does not begin to suggest what the films call to mind or why they're so moving. There is always a residue of feeling that isn't resolved. Two young men sprawled on a porch after a hot journey, a drunken group doing the Twist in the dark on a country road, Sharmila Tagore's face lit by a cigarette lighter, her undulating walk in a sari—the images are suffused with feeling and become overwhelmingly, sometimes unbearably beautiful. The emotions that are imminent may never develop, but we're left with the sense of a limitless yet perhaps harmonious natural drama that the characters are part of. There are always larger, deeper associations impending; we recognize the presence of the mythic in the ordinary. And it's the mythic we're left with after the ordinary has been (temporarily) resolved.

When 'Days and Nights in the Forest,' which was made in 1969, was shown at the New York Film Festival in 1970, it received a standing ovation, and it seemed so obvious that a film of this quality —and one more immediate in its appeal than many of Ray's works —would be snapped up by a distributor that I waited to review it upon its theatre opening. But distributors are often lazy men who don't bother much with festivals, least of all with films that are shown at the dinner hour (it went on at six-thirty); they wait for the *Times.* The review was condescendingly kindly and brief—a mere five and a half inches and not by the first-string critic—and 'Days and Nights in the Forest,' which is a major film by a major artist, is finally opening, two and a half years later, for a week's run at a small theatre. On the surface, it is a lyrical romantic comedy about four educated young men from Calcutta driving together for a few days in the

country, their interrelations, and what happens to them in the forest, which is both actual and metaphorical. As the men rag each other and bicker, we quickly sort them out. Ashim is a rising executive and the natural leader of the group. Lordly and disdainful to underlings, he is the worst-behaved; the most intelligent, he is also the most dissatisfied with his life and himself—he feels degraded. He and Sanjoy, who is more polite and reticent, used to slave on a literary magazine they edited, but they have settled down. Ashim is much like what Apu might have turned into if he had been corrupted, and he is played by Soumitra Chatterjee, who was Apu in 'The World of Apu.' On this holiday in the forest, Ashim meets Aparna, played by the incomparably graceful Sharmila Tagore (who ten years before, when she was fourteen, played Aparna, Apu's exquisite bride). In his fine book on the Apu Trilogy, Robin Wood wrote that the physical and spiritual beauty of Soumitra Chatterjee and Sharmila Tagore seems 'the ideal incarnation of Ray's belief in human potentialities.' And I think they represent that to Ray, and inspire him to some of his finest work (he used them also in 'Devi') because they are modern figures with overtones of ancient deities. Unlike the other characters in 'Days and Nights in the Forest,' they bridge the past and the future and—to some degree—India and the West. As Ray uses them, they embody more than we can consciously grasp. But we feel it : when Sharmila Tagore in her sunglasses and white slacks stands still for a second, she's a creature of fable—the image carries eternity. Even her melodious voice seems old and pure, as if it had come through fire.

Ashim has been strangling in the business bureaucracy of Calcutta; frustrated, he has become an egotist, and confidently condescending to women. Aparnà, a city girl vacationing at her father's house in the forest along with her widowed sister-in-law, is not impressed by his big-city line. Her irony and good sense cut through his arrogance, and made to feel foolish, he rediscovers his humanity. Underneath their love story, and, the stories of Ashim's companions, there's the melancholy and corruption of their class and country. In a quiet way, the subtext is perhaps the subtlest, most plangent study of the cultural tragedy of imperialism the screen has ever had. It is the tragedy of the bright young generation who have internalized the master race (like many of the refugees from Hitler who came to America); their status identity is so British that they treat all non-Anglicized Indians as non-persons. The caste system and the British attitudes seem to have conspired to turn them into self-parodies — clowns who ape the worst snobberies of the British. The highest compliment the quartet can bestow on Aparna's father's cottage is to say, 'The place looks absolutely English'. We don't laugh at them, though, because they're achingly conscious of being anachronistic and slightly ridiculous. When we see them playing tennis in the forest, the image is so ambiguous that our responses come in waves.

Ray not only directed but did the screenplay (from a novel by Sunil Ganguly), drew the credit titles, and wrote the music. His means as a director are among the most intuitively right in all moviemaking; he knows when to shift the camera from one face to another to reveal the utmost, and he knows how to group figures in a frame more expressively than anyone else. He doesn't butt into a scene; he seems to let it play itself out. His understatement makes most of what is thought of as film technique seem unnecessary, and even decadent, because he does more without it. (No Western director has been able to imitate him.) The story is told with great precision at the same time that the meanings and associations multiply. Ray seems to add something specifically Eastern to the 'natural' style of Jean Renoir. Renoir, too, put us in unquestioning and total—yet discreet—contact with his people, and everything seemed fluid and easy, and open in form. But Renoir's time sense is different. What is distinctive in Ray's work (and it may be linked to Bengali traditions in the arts, and perhaps to Sanskrit) is that sense of imminence—the suspension of the images in a larger context. The rhythm of his films seems not slow but, rather, meditative, as if the viewer could see the present as part of the past and could already reflect on what is going on. There is a rapt, contemplative quality in the beautiful intelligence of his ideal lovers. We're not at all surprised in this film that both Ashim and Aparna have phenomenal memories; we knew that from looking at them.

Ray takes a risk when he contrasts his poetic sense of time against the hasty Western melodramatic tradition. One of the four young men is a figure in the sporting world—Hari, who is quick-tempered and rash. He has just been jilted by a dazzler of a girl for his insensitivity. (He answered a six-page letter from her in a single curt sentence.) Hari picks up a local 'tribal' girl in the forest for some fast sex, and he is also attacked and almost killed by a servant he has wrongly accused of stealing. The scenes relating to Hari (especially those dealing with the equally thoughtless local girl) feel very thin and unconvincing, because they are conventional. They have no

mystery, no resonance, and though this is surely deliberate, the contrast doesn't succeed; the scenes seem more contrived than they would in an American movie. In a scene by a river, Sharmila Tagore's glance brings Hari back into the film's harmony, but he goes out again. The fourth young man, Sekhar, has no subplot; he's a plump buffoon, a fawning hanger-on, who drops pidgin-English phrases into his conversation as if they were golden wit. Like Joyce Cary's Mr Johnson in Africa, he's a joke the British left behind. Nothing happens to him; spinelessly affable, he behaves in the country as he does in the city.

It is the shy Sanjoy who has the worst experience. Aparna's sister-in-law, the young, heavily sensual widow, makes a physical overture to him. She has been flirting with him for days, and we have observed the ordinariness of her middle-class character, listened to the coyness in her slightly disagreeable voice; we know that he is flattered by her attention and oblivious of the import of her broad smiles and provocative, teasing manner. When she lures him in at night with an offer of real coffee and puts her hand on his chest, we see his stricken face, and we are torn in half. She hadn't seen in him what we had, or he in her. Ray, without our full awareness, has prepared us, and now we are brought closer to them both than we had ever anticipated. This desperately lonely woman might be too much for most men and this man is less secure than most. The moment of his petrified indecision about how to retreat and her realization of the rejection is a fully tragic experience. Ray is a master psychologist; the pain for us is the deeper because Ray had made her so coarse-grained that we hadn't cared for her; now her humiliation illuminates what was going on in her while we were dismissing her for her middle-classness and the tension in her voice. No artist has done more than Satyajit Ray to make us reevaluate the commonplace. At one point, the four young blades and the two women sit in a circle on picnic blankets and play a memory game that might be called Let Us Now Praise Famous Men; it's a pity that James Agee didn't live to see the films of Satyajit Ray, which fulfil Agee's dreams.

PAULINE KAEL
New Yorker, New York 1973

Pratidwandi

1 India's Satyajit Ray offers 'Adversary'

'The Adversary' screening tonight at 7 at Theater Vanguard's Film International, marks an exciting new direction for India's Satyajit Ray.

Ever since the monumental Apu trilogy with which Ray launched his notable career, he has always stuck to a straightforward narrative style with almost unvarying success.

With this film he retains that approach but enriches it with revealing memory and fantasy sequences that take place in the mind of his troubled young hero, Siddhartha (Dhritiman Chatterjee).

As a result, 'The Adversary' is Ray's most introspective film, and we come to know Siddhartha perhaps better than any other Ray character.

There is great universality in Siddhartha's story. His father having died suddenly, he has been forced to drop out of medical school. 'The Adversary's time span is that period between the young man's leaving school and finally getting a job.

Most of us have experienced the agonizing limbo of being out of work. For Siddhartha, as it is with practically everybody, it is a time of painful discovery of self and of the realities of the worlds in which we live. Typical of young idealistic intellectuals everywhere, Siddhartha questions everything—the implications of Vietnam, the compromises that the establishment demands if we are to survive within it and the strains and changes in family relationships.

In charting Siddhartha's progress, Ray depicts India as a country whose brightest youths are as unhappy with the status quo as their American counterparts.

More directly political than any of Ray's previous pictures, 'The Adversary', completed in 1971, is said to be the second in a new trilogy that began with 'Days and Nights in the Forest', which has been announced for local release some time this summer.

If that film and the next are the equal of 'The Adversary', Ray quite possibly could surpass his previous extraordinary achievements.

KEVIN THOMAS
Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles 1973

2

Satyajit Ray won the grand prix, when there were awards, at the Venice Fest in 1957 and had part of a two sketch pic here some years ago with *The Coward*. His new pic marks a return to the more important Western fests and shows him in good form with his humanistic, unsentimental insights into youthful problems on the background of the problems of India.

Ray here treats a timely theme though it still has his timeless manner of character rightness, gentle but probing narrative and poetic underpinning as he aptly displayed in his noted Apu trilogy. Here he shifts to the city for his tale of a young man whose education was stopped by the death of his father when almost through medical school and his attempts to find a job, cope with personal and family problems and the political, social and family problems and the political, social and economic aspects that affect him, although he is not a committed revolutionary or politically active.

His Apu trilogy benefited from a cumulative power though each was a full entity in its own right. Here he uses sudden visuals from the past as they shape the present, plus the use of negative for his dreams and more traumatic things that lead to making up the background and character of the protagonist. Ray reveals he has adapted these methods without any slavishness or copying and they work into his film about youthful adaptation in an overpopulated country, not to mention the generation gap, revolutionary outlooks and problems that are indigenous but finally universal.

There are some talky segs and perhaps the poetic grace and throbbing life force that inhabited his early triumphs are only intermittently surfaced here. But they are enough to make this one of his best films in some time.

However its muted style, refusal to be explicit about sex, politics and poverty (though the film transcends this to show a man in action and living to reveal needs and decisions sans didactics or overindulgence), it is clear where Ray's sympathics lie, slant this more for offshore fest, school, cinematheque and some specialized spots where careful handling, placement and the Ray name should find it a following.

Ray also supplies a fine reserved musical score that never intrudes and again shows flair in his handling of his players, especially the young women whose desires, hopes and instinctively right behaviour counterpoint the groping but tender disposition of the main character who does revolt at one interview where many are kept waiting in a stifling big room without enough seats. Nicely graded lensing also helps. So Ray shows himself reflecting more modern aspects of Indian life as well as his more general human comedy lines up to now.

GENE MASKOWITZ
Variety, New York 8 September 1971

3

Too much, probably, has been made of the increasingly direct political involvement in Satyajit Ray's work indicated by *The Adversary* (Contemporary). It is but a stone's throw, after all, from Siddhartha's running battle with the Establishment back to the young couple's fight for the right to work for an honest wage in *Mahanagar*, or for that matter to Ashok's refusal to sell out to the lures of big business in *Kanchenjunga*. The difference, as Ray himself has pointed out, is one of political climate : 'You feel it every moment of the day in Calcutta : not just the bombs and the explosions, but meeting people and walking the streets with the posters on the walls.'

In a city where misery is not only extreme but subject to extremes — so that Siddhartha, sitting down by the riverbank to enjoy a quiet cigarette, turns his head from the reproachful gaze of a beggar only to encounter a band of ecstatic American hippies ('Oh, what a beautiful place . . . this is where the magic is')—some sort of revolt is inevitable. But although Siddhartha's fist is metaphorically clenched from the moment of no return when a selection board slaps a label on him ('Are you a Communist?') in reply to his assertion that the most significant event of the last decade is Vietnam and its revelation of a people's courage, Ray does not follow Glauber Rocha or Godard with a mathematical analysis of the cause and effect of revolution; his equation, as always, is founded not on figures but on faces.

Reading Che Guevara, aloof from personal concerns, single-minded in his devotion to the cause on hand, Siddhartha's younger brother Tunu is the *sine qua non* of revolutionary cinema : the communicant who has totally erased the past in order to devote himself to a present whose justification will be the creation of a new, undefined future. To Ray, as to Siddhartha, he is clearly an enigma.

'Do you remember that bird?' Siddhartha asks at one point. 'Bird?' says Tunu vaguely. And Siddhartha's 'No, you wouldn't,' sadly acknowledges the fact that there are people to whom the mysterious magic of memory means nothing at all; the magic, for instance, of that moment earlier in the film when Siddhartha's bitter remonstrations with his sister over the attempts to act the emancipated woman are forgotten in a sudden shared delight as they become children again to remember the strange and tantalizingly unfamiliar song of a bird.

Like the old zamindar in *Jalsaghar*, Siddhartha cannot live without his past, and in a sense his dilemma is a looking-glass version of the one posed in the earlier film, since he cannot retreat into the past he refuses to abandon. 'The Gods to each ascribe a differing lot/ Some enter at the portal, some do not,' was Ford Madox Ford's mocking comment on the growing pains which attend changing times in *Parade's End* (curious how one always returns to the English novel in writing about Ray); and where the zamindar, one of the elect by birth and fortune, has his portal within which to retreat, Siddhartha is a poor medical student and must face the realities of the outside world.

There, surrounded by moral irreconcilables, he emerges as that paradox so acutely analysed by Ford Madox Ford in the character of Christopher Tietjens, the old-fashioned Tory so compleat that he is *therefore* the purest of socialists. An inborn and sternly cultivated sense of honour ensures that Siddhartha emerges from his pilgrim's progress through contemporary Calcutta—the ubiquitous suffering, the cracked cups in cafés, the selection boards designed to safeguard the system, the medical student pilfering from Red Cross collection boxes, the sister being tempted into a life of sin—with an instinctive, unqualified cry in support of his brother's programme. 'The only way,' says Siddhartha, 'is a machine-gun to clean it all up.' Yet those same inborn qualities mean that his revolutionary impulses are always blocked by his desire to preserve the status quo of humanity. Charging blindly in to join an angry mob bent on revenge against the glossy, chauffeur-driven limousine which has just knocked down a little girl, Siddhartha stops dead in his tracks. Facing him is not the abstract mask of oppression, but another frightened, helpless child sobbing in the back seat.

It is this moment of truth, coupled with the humiliating debacle when he runs away after being introduced by a friend to an obliging prostitute, that tumbles Siddhartha into a nightmare of doubt (perfectly judged flashes in which he imagines himself as victim of a revolutionary guillotine, his brother facing a firing-squad, his sister sucked into a lurid career as a model), made all the more unbearable by another memory dredged up as a buffer but instantly turned against him. As children, he remembers, it was of course Tunu the cold-blooded revolutionary who used to watch fascinated while chickens were decapitated for the family dinner. 'What of it,' retorts Tunu, 'you're the one who liked chicken, not me.'

Characteristically, Ray restores Siddhartha's belief in his own values with an oblique affirmation of the continuity of both time and humanity. Walking disconsolately home after a blustering visit to his sister's boss in a manifestly uncalled for attempt to protect her good name, he is hailed from the shadows of a doorway by one of those deliciously, shyly provocative Ray heroines, whose diffident request for help in mending a broken fuse heralds the birth of a tender but quietly soaring love affair. Then, when he finally reaches home to take up the cudgels with his sister, she takes his hand and leads him out into the moonlit yard. 'I'm taking dancing lessons,' she explains; and in a moment of weird enchantment which echoes the memory of the strange bird singing, she dances for him while he translates her in his mind to the alien setting of a cocktail party. 'How you've changed,' he says simply. 'So has everyone,' she replies.

The calm reconciliation of this moment—his childhood love now secure in its new context—is echoed in the superb final sequence. Having contrived to remain true to himself by making the quixotic gesture of protest which ensures that he will lose his chance of a foot in the door of success, Siddhartha is banished to a remote village and a dead-end job as a pharmaceutical salesman. In a sordid little room he settles down to write a love letter. 'I don't expect to be happy here,' he writes, 'but my worries are nothing to yours, and they'll vanish when I get your letter.' And outside, somewhere amid the rice-fields and the ox-carts of his childhood, the mysterious bird sings again, a bridge across time and space.

TOM MILNE

Sight and Sound, vol. 42, no.2. Winter 1972/1973

Ashani Sanket

1 A Dream of Women

The colour imagery of Satyajit Ray's *Distant Thunder* is so expressive that I regretted the need to look down to the subtitles: it took precious time away from the faces and bodies, with their hint of something passive, self-absorbed—a narcissism of the flesh. The setting is a torpid Bengali village in the early 1940s. Gangacharan (Soumitra Chatterji), a newly arrived Brahmin, is the only educated man for miles around: he's the schoolteacher, the priest, the doctor. The ignorant villagers treat him with reverence. 'You are the jewel in our crown,' they tell him, and he agrees. His condescension is all of a piece with the umbrella. his moustache and speech, and his preoccupied manner. He strokes himself in the moist, wilting heat; he sucks on a water pipe, inhaling wherever he goes—Gangacharan wants every kind of gratification he can get.

Soumitra Chatterji, Ray's one-man stock company, moves so differently in the different roles he plays that he's almost unrecognizable. He was the passionately romantic Apu in the last film of the trilogy, the husband in *Devi*, the suitor in tartan socks and English boots in *Two Daughters*, the guest in *Charulata*, the handsome, arrogant leader of the four young men in *Days and Nights in the Forest*. At first, his Gangacharan is almost physically dislikable—thin yet flabby, contemptuously pedantic; in the course of the film, as the feudal system that sustains this contempt is eroded, his body seems to change. The Second World War, which is so remote from the villagers that they don't know who is fighting, destroys the traditions that bind the community. The area is idyllically lush, but it isn't self-sufficient. When faraway supply ports for grain fall to the Japanese, and large shipments of food are needed for the Army, the price of rice soars. Speculators send it higher, and starvation and cholera will shortly follow. Famine approaches with the force of a natural disaster; the villagers are helpless.

During the early stages, the light is so soft, and the lily pads, the flying insects, the bathing women are so tranquil, that even when the women are hungry and picking snails out of the mud or digging for wild potatoes, the images are still harmonious. The film is delicately, ambiguously beautiful; the shadowing comes from our knowledge—and Gangacharan's knowledge—that the people we're looking at are endangered. It is a lyric chronicle of a way of life just before its extinction, and Ray gives the action the distilled, meditative expressiveness that he alone of all directors seems able to give. We're looking at something that we feel is already gone, and so the images throb. Or is it that we do? It comes to the same thing.

Whether intentionally or not, Ray has put something of himself into Gangacharan—of his own sense of guilt, of weakness, and of commitment. And something even more personal—his seeing the beauty in the Indian past almost completely in the women. The men in this village are ignorant and obsequious, and physically very unprepossessing; the rich ones hoard and profiteer, the poor panic, become violent, riot. But the women are conceived of as in a dream of the past—they might be iridescent figures on a vase. These women are uneducated and superstitious, they know nothing of the world outside; yet they're tender and infinitely graceful. Moving in their thin, clinging saris, they create sensuous waves of colour in the steamy air. Gangacharan's bride, Ananga, is innocently childlike, undulant, luscious, with a pouty ripe-pink underlip; the brilliant orange-red spot in the middle of her forehead is like a cosmic beauty mark. Played by the actress Babita (that should mean Baby Doll), Ananga is the Indian version of a Hollywood darling. She seems to have been created for the pleasure of men; she has been bred to think of nothing but her husband, and she finds her pride and her fulfilment in pleasing him. She wants to be a tempting morsel so that her husband can take a juicy bite.

Ananga is just the ornament of his existence that this preening Brahmin would have found; everything in the society appears to be designed to assuage his ego. Yet he's intelligent, and he's not a bad fellow—merely infantile. When he realizes that he can't fulfil his end of the bargain. and his wife must do demeaning work to get food for them, the whole basis of their relationship changes. Gangacharan begins to care about someone besides himself. He loves her now not because she takes care of him but because of how she feels about taking care of him. There are other actresses in the film with a fine-

grand quality that goes beyond Babita's almost pornographic charm —the one who plays Moti, the Untouchable, and another who plays a woman who gives Gangacharan food to take home to his wife. They, too, are gentle and undemanding—ideal traditional women.

Ray is one of the most conscious artists who ever lived, and in this film he means to show us the subservient status of women; the children Gangacharan teaches (by rote, drumming information into them) are, of course, all boys. The women remain illiterate, and locked into the vestiges of the caste system—Ananga and Moti are friends, but if they touch each other Ananga bathes. However, I wonder if Ray realizes the degree to which he shows a deep-seated distrust of Indian men and an equally deep trust in the selflessness of women. (Even Ananga's friend Chhutki, who trades her favours for food—giving herself to a hideously scarred kiln worker—wants to share the rice she gets.) Ray is not a vulgar chauvinist, exalting subservient women; quite the contrary. While the men in his films are weak and easily flattered—dupes, self-deceived by vanity and ambition—the women have conflicts that are larger, more dignified, involving a need for love, for independence, for self-expression. They are morally stronger than the men. This may, in part, reflect a belief that the women, having always been in a subservient position, were not corrupted by English rule in the way that the men were.

Still, in *Distant Thunder*, in a village far removed from that emasculating Anglicization, Ray perceives the women with such love that they become figures in a vision, and since he sees the men without that etherealizing intensity, there's an imbalance—poetry and prose. In the Apu trilogy, the hero was the embodiment of poetry, but here it is only at the end, when Gangacharan accepts a group of famine victims as his family, that he becomes as compassionate (and as fully human) as the women were all along. For Ray, the source of their strength is humility. And although one wouldn't propose any other course of action for Gangacharan, the way Ray sees him—made whole by his passive, chivalrous acceptance of what's coming—suggests a rather attenuated attempt at universalizing his situation. Satyajit Ray has rarely before dabbled in having his characters do what he so obviously believes is symbolically right; you expect a faint white light to begin whirring around Gangacharan's head. And when, with famine victims approaching their home, Ananga, with a shy fortuitous smile of pride, speaks of the child she is carrying, this too seems to be symbolic of endurance in the midst of extreme adversity.

The music, which Ray composed, is also used portentously, signalling 'distant thunder.' And Ray has developed an alarming affection for melodramatic angles and zoom-fast closeups; when there's a violent action—the scarred man's overtures to Chhutki, or a rapist's assault on Ananga—he wants us to feel the dislocation. But it's intrusive, pushy; his style can't accommodate this visual abrasion. When a movie director suddenly loses his tact, he can shock viewers right out of the movie: cameras are cruel to the disfigured, and when Ray forces us to look close at the enlarged burned face of the kiln worker, we don't understand why. He's introduced like a Quasimodo, and though the more we see him, the easier it is to look at him, his becoming more sympathetic—so that we notice how attractive the good side of his face is—is too pedagogic, too symbolic. The rapist appears even more abruptly; we don't see his face—all we know about him is that he smokes cigarettes, like a Westerner. He remains a plot device, an illustration of the horrors these women experience, and hide, guiltily. Ray's use of emphatic techniques to heighten the impact of his material actually lowers it. When Ananga first mistakes planes flying overhead for insects, that's naive and halfway acceptable, but when, later, the noise of the planes drowns out her screams as she's being raped, that's ladling it on. The ironies are too charged, as in the situations that American television writers come up with; this cleverness is the dramatist's form of yellow journalism. In Ray's work, what remains inarticulate is what we remember; what is articulated seems reduced, ordinary.

Distant Thunder is not one of his greatest films, yet it's still a Satyajit Ray film, and in how many directors' films does one anticipate greatness? With Ray, you puzzle if a picture is a little less than a masterpiece. If this one lacks the undertones of a *Days and Nights in the Forest,* it's probably because he's trying to do something that sounds straightforward but isn't quite clearly thought out. Ray wants to show us how war changes people (Bergman brought it off in *Shame*), but he also wants to make an indictment. And somehow he fails on both counts. Probably he fails on the first because he doesn't endow the villagers with enough complexity. And maybe he didn't think of them in complex enough terms because he had that second, social purpose in mind. When Gangacharan learns political lessons —when he discovers that what's wrong is that 'the peasants do all the work and we live off them'—it's just plain fake. Gangacharan's sponging off the peasants—in the sense that he served them with bad

grace, contemptuously, demanding a little more than was fair —is hardly a factor in the starvation. When we get the closing title, telling us that five million Bengalis died in the man-made famine of 1943, Ray uses the term 'man-made' because it implies that the famine was a crime. But it looks more like a horrible pileup of accidents, plus some criminal greed, and thousands of years of no planning. His statement seems forced; his whole structure is forced, and yet the film is astonishingly beautiful. The character of Gangacharan—a mixture of slothful peacefulness and a sense of dissatisfaction which he takes out on the peasants and an inquisitive, modern mind—is a fine creation, except for terminal loftiness. And there's also a character Ray can't quite get a grip on: a beggar Brahmin with a gap-tooth rabbity smile that Gangacharan calls sly. It's that, and worse. Throughout the movie, whenever he appears, he seems to suck life away. He creates the most disturbing images, maybe because Ray sees him as both the life force and as dirty Death itself. At the end, it's he who arrives with his tribe of dependents—eight in all—to join Gangacharan's household. With his rags hanging on him and his staff in his hand, he's all four horsemen rolled into one. In the final image, the silhouetted figures of this old man leading his family are extended into a procession of the starving advancing on us. It's a poster design, and yet we're also prey to unresolved feeling about that sly beggar. The film is more puzzling than it seems at first; Ray is such an imagist that even his poster art slips into ambiguities.

I don't know when I've been so moved by a picture that I knew was riddled with flaws. It must be that Ray's vision comes out of so much hurt and guilt and love that the feeling pours over all the cracks in *Distant Thunder* and seal them up.

PAULINE KAEL
New Yorker, New York 10 November 1975

2 The Statistics of Starvation

However bad the main competitive festival in Berlin is—and this year is no exception—one can usually count on a new film by Satyajit Ray to lift the spirits. And this year obeyed that rule as well.

It is becoming increasingly clear with each passing year that Ray has entered on a new phase in his career. Gone forever are the forays into Calcutta's Anglo-Indian intelligentsia; gone are the charms of 'Days and Nights in the Forest', and with this year's 'Distant Thunder' he has come to grips with the seemingly insuperable, alarmingly astronomical problems of the subcontinent.

'Distant Thunder' is set in 1942—Singapore has fallen and Burma is about to go. To the villagers in a remote part of Bengal, it all seems far away. But soon the price of rice begins to mount: kerosene is no longer available. At first this doesn't affect the hero of the film or his wife : they are Brahmins, and he is the priest, doctor, and schoolteacher of the village. But eventually even they are threatened by the growing famine. The cost of a measure of rice goes from 6 rupees to 8; then to 10, 20 and then there is just no more rice to be had.

But some people do have rice—they have hoarded it : the villagers catch on, and attack the local grain merchant. Brahmin Ganga slowly begins to grasp what is happening, to understand that he must alter his views, must change his life.

This raising of consciousness is handled by Ray with all his usual mixture of subtlety and strength : this is his second film in colour, and the brilliance of his effects—a girl in a red sari against the green of tall waving grass, the pair of orange butterflies that punctuate the film—these only serve to intensify the contrast between the beauty of the landscape and the horror of what is happening.

That horror is consistently understated. When Moti, the little untouchable girl, dies of hunger at Ganga's doorstep, it is presented almost casually. We almost do not even notice the other girl, hovering patiently in the bushes. Ganga's wife has given Moti all she has—a little bundle of vegetable roots, but Moti is too far gone to eat them. When she gives up the ghost, suddenly the little girl quietly steps forward and takes the bundle of roots she has been waiting for.

And when the famine reaches epidemic proportions, and the old Brahmin from the next village arrives with his family, Ganga simply says well, before we were two, now we will be ten. But as the old man's family advances, we see that they are not eight, but an army which gradually fills the screen. And then a final title flashes on the screen: in the 1943 famine, five million people died.

Five million people—who can feel anything for the death of five million ?—the number is beyond human empathy : but because of the way Ray leads up to it, the statistic becomes overwhelmingly real.

RICHARD ROUD
Guardian, London 1973

Sonar Kella

With 'The Golden Fortress', India's top filmmaker, Satyajit Ray, shows exactly what kind of children's film can be made when a major talent is behind the helm—entertaining, non-patronizing fare that can beguile youngsters and oldsters alike. It's the kind of film that points out the glaring weaknesses in films being turned out recently by some major studios.

Ray, who has been strongly involved in the publication of a monthly children's magazine, *Sandesh*, since 1960 and has written several novels for youngsters, knows how to hold their attention—by filling the screen with wonderful characters and locales, transmitting a real feel for adventure in the process.

'The Golden Fortress' is about a boy Mukul, who stays up night drawing pictures of people and places he's never seen. With the help of a parapsychologist, it's determined that he's recalling events from a former life. The doctor takes Mukul on a journey from Calcutta to Rajasthan in an attempt to locate a certain gold fortress the boy dreams about where he says jewels are kept. Two con men read about the trip in the paper, convincingly intercept and befriend Mukul, while a private eye and his teenage assistant, wise to their scheme, follow their trail.

Though the film runs a mite long, there is no padding, nor is there any of the forced slapstick and soft violence that dominate many American children's films. Rather, Ray relies on his storytelling talents and rich characterizations. The performers are quite good and sometimes very funny. The film is also beautifully photographed. It was shown at the 1975 Teheran Children's Festival.

LYOD

Variety, New York 1975

Jana Aranya

Aimez-vous Brahmins ?

Satyajit Ray has always been more than an acute and subtle observer of humanity. Those he looks at so closely are invariably criticized too. The old aristo in *The Music Room*, desperately staving off the inevitable, is scrutinized with sympathy and understanding, even affection. But we are left in no doubt at all as to his sad and culpable futility. What Ray seldom does is to condemn out of hand. Those who see the truth in simple black and white will always find in his films too many confusing shades of grey.

The Middle Man (Academy One, AA) may well be thought by some to redress the balance more thoroughly than either *Company Limited* or *Distant Thunder*. And certainly it is one of Ray's most pessimistic essays, containing a strong hint that it is becoming increasingly difficult, in India as elsewhere, to avoid the conclusion that corruption is endemic and that black rather than grey is the colour with which we ought to paint it. But essentially it is still a film by a director for whom Renoir is at least as important as Rossellini. It notes, for instance, that there is a perfectly good Sanskrit word for bribe and a surfeit of sex and violence in the Mahabharata. So what else is new ?

Somnath, the young protagonist, is from a solidly respectable Brahmin family and becomes a middleman in business only because he hasn't got the necessary degree, perhaps due to the failing eyesight of an overworked examiner. With only a pass, he is thrown on a market that sometimes has a million applicants for every ten jobs. You have to know the ropes to get out of such a dilemma and working for yourself, as a commissioned link between buyers and sellers, at least provides a loophole.

'It is, at any rate, less of a defeat than being married off by father

to the daughter of the owner of a cement shop. He is still, however, an innocent, to be taken in hand by those for whom doubtful compromise is a cheerful way of life. One compromise, of course, leads to another, and inevitably the infection spreads. A profitable deal is eventually set up but it means providing a girl for the client. With time running out and brothels raided to no effect, Somnath finds Juthika. She is the sister of his best friend . . .

Ray tells his story in detail and with great precision. He carefully, and sometimes a little painstakingly, summons up not a world of villains but a society where little villainies are commonplace enough to be openly accepted as the norm. Perhaps the final twist may seem too moralistic for Western eyes (a girl is, after all, less soiled by polite prostitution than impolite starvation).

But nowhere does Ray attempt to mince words—Somnath's desperate attempts to find a whore are among the best and most plain-speaking scenes in the film. Maybe he is still talking about people in India with enough freedom to make moral choices. But what he says, almost along the line, has the distinct ring of truth. It is also a film of some severity without a trace of either cynicism or sentimentality. For Ray, people still matter and he won't sneer, patronize or laugh at them.

DEREK MALCOLM
Guardian, London 1977

Shatranj ke Khiladi

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Satyajit Ray's *The Chess Players* (Connoisseur) is the ambivalence with which Ray views the matter of politics and progress, recalling the fact that twenty years ago, in *Jalsaghar,* he demonstrated how an aristocratic landowner's irredeemable social negligence might yet aspire to a state of grace through his overruling delight in beauty. There, more overtly but no more inescapably than in the new film, Ray's direction recorded the death of a way of life, a suicide willingly undertaken because pure beauty cannot survive unvarnished in a crassly material world.

Concentrating exclusively on the two noble chess players, who care for nothing but the game and blithely play on while the East India Company completes its strategy for a bloodless takeover of the last independent Indian state in 1857, Premchand's original story made no secret of the message it intended to convey. Indeed, wryly fulminating against the cult of pleasure instilled in his people by the Nawab of Oudh, the story echoes the one-sided view expressed in the film by the British Resident, General Outram (superbly played by Richard Attenborough with a soft Scotish burr and a sharp Presbyterian conscience). 'Apathy was writ large across every aspect of life': small wonder, then, that Oudh should lose its independence and the British Empire gain a priceless chattel.

Ray, however, splits his viewpoint three ways (or perhaps four, if one considers the unspoken voice accorded to the common people, condemned to drudgery as servants and no doubt to poverty as an inevitable corollary to the splendours of the court). Two of these, represented on the one hand by the montage sequence which sketches a concise but enormously expressive account of Britain's relationship with Oudh, and on the other by the tale of the two chess players, are governed by the historical determinants of British colonial arrogance and India's obliging submission to superior technology. Rendered economically essential by the mounting financial weight of colonial expansion, the annexation of Oudh is already a *fait accompli* in which the Nawab's consent is required merely as a matter of form. Meanwhile, disdainfully amused by the hustling manners and mores of the British, both chess players (two more brilliant performances by Saeed Jaffrey and Sanjeev Kumar) nevertheless remain respectfully subdued by the wonder of imported railway trains and telegraph wires. And contrary to his usual concern for the respect due to the characters' lives (here, for instance, their potentially painful marital problems are raised in order to further the plot, then left in the air in the traditional manner of farce), Ray treats both characters essentially as caricatures to match the cartoon basis of his historical montage.

In a sense, therefore, these two 'viewpoints' cancel each other out; if the march of progress is inevitable in the wake of the British Empire, equally inevitable is the fact—for all the chess players' stout insistence that they will play today but fight tomorrow—that India is not going to find the will to resist. And here Ray's third voice comes in, expressed by the arts whose fantastic flowering under the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah turned Lucknow into the treasure-house of Moslem culture. Not always entirely accessible to the untrained Western ear, the intrinsic grace of the Nawab's personal achievements (poems, songs, operas, dances) is nevertheless inescapable in the camera's rapt attention as Outram's aide recites and clumsily translates a poem (remaining coldly askance as Outram drily comments, 'Doesn't strike me as a great flight of fancy, I'm afraid'); in the reverence with which the Nawab's prime minister waits for a kathak dance to end before informing him of the East India Company's disastrous ultimatum; and above all, perhaps, in the way Wajid Ali Shah's music and his throne are woven together (by way of two songs inspired by its presence) in a dazzlingly poetic definition of regality.

Ray, of course, is not naive enough to suggest that artistic talent compensates for misrule, or that if the peasant has no bread he can eat opera. His Wajid Ali Shah (Amjad Khan) is the first to admit that his administration has been poor and that in this he has been a bad king. Not stooping to bandy logic like his mother, who very pertinently asks Outram why the East India Company did not guide her son with advice if they felt his administration was lacking, Wajid Ali Shah is nevertheless well aware of the mousetrap into which he has been coerced. Recalling that he once behaved as a real king, raising an army to defend his frontiers (engagingly, his memory also conjures a regiment of 'pretty girls in pretty dresses on pretty horses') only to be told not to bother as British troops would take care of all that, he neatly summarizes the colonial dilemma; 'What will the king do then, if he doesn't bother about his kingdom?'

His answer, found on the throne to which one of his songs came like a mysterious gift, was to express his innermost self, and by so doing, to turn Lucknow into a garden of happiness and beauty. If it also contained its quota of the unhappy and underprivileged, his defence is stout : 'I've been a bad king. If my people had come to me and said so, if they said you're making us suffer, we don't want you, I would have cast away my crown then and there. But they didn't. Because I went out to them and showed them my true self. I was not afraid to show them what kind of a king I was. Even after ten years I can see the love in their eyes. And they love my songs. They *sing* them!'

To Outram, as a foreign potentate who flies kites, dances like a nautch girl, and keeps harems of concubines for his pleasure while staunchly observing his prayers five times a day, Wajid Ali Shah remains an enigma, never more so than in their final confrontation. Having already decided to disband his army rather than spill his people's blood by offering resistance, he cannot bring himself to abdicate in answer to foreign pressure, and instead hands Outram his turban: 'I can bare my head for you, but I cannot sign that treaty.' Once again Wajid Ali Shah reveals his inner self, and Outram's outrage is the incomprehension of a man faced by a mute, alien mystery. Of a colonial administrator, in fact, faced by native resistance to political or cultural paternalism.

Unlike Premchand, Ray does not blame his two heroes for preferring the chessboard to the battlefield. Engagingly fantastical (much of the film is wonderfully funny, especially when, after losing their chess set to a disgruntled wife, the pair are frustrated in their attempts to borrow another by the untimely death of its owner and are reduced to improvising pieces out of fruit, nuts and spice bottles), their pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of strife is just as Wajid Ali Shah would have wished.

The one point on which a hint of censure glimmers is their unthinking failure to preserve, like Wajid Ali Shah, their Indianness against the threat of takeover. At the very end of the film, after the British troops march past on their way to Lucknow, the chess players settle down to another game as a distant bugle blows the retreat. 'Move over, Prime Minister,' says one, rearranging the pieces on the board, 'make way for Queen Victoria!' No longer are they playing chess as it was invented in India : already they have adopted the more expeditious English version of the rules.

TOM MILNE
Sight and Sound, Spring 1978

Joy Baba Felunath

Joy Baba Satyajit

'Incomparable atmosphere, clusters of immobile windows . . . the curves in the lanes, the breaks in facades of houses . . . Saptarshi Arati, a spine-tingling experience . . . pigeons taking flight in a body.' Satyajit Ray wrote this more than twenty years ago, in Varanasi while shooting *Aparajito.* Marie Seton, Ray's biographer, says the city 'intoxicated' him but Ray restrained the intoxication and subjected it to the demands of the film. Now, twenty years later, Ray has recaptured that haunting vision and flooded his latest (Bengali) film *Joy Baba Felunath* with the city's visual richness. *Felunath* is an unalloyed delight. it belongs to the *Sonar Kella* genre. But while *Sonar Kella* was a *jeu d'esprit*, *Felunuth* reminds you of some of the early novels of Graham Greene (*The Man Within*)—an adventure tale till you suddenly come up against the menace and terror.

Private eye Felunath who is on a holiday in Varanasi with assistant Tapesh and Jatayu, writer of popular adventure tales (the same happy team of *Sonar Kella*—Soumitra Chatterjee, Siddhartha Chatterjee, and Santosh Dutta), gets caught up in the investigation of the theft of a Ganesha idol from the house of a friend, Ghoshal. The investigation involves an employee of the family, a bogus sadhu and a merchant-receiver of stolen goods (Utpal Dutt). The film is based on a published story by Ray—in itself a triumph of skill and imagination. In the film the story holds adults and young alike to the very end. The credits come on against an old map of Varanasi (lovingly photographed) and then we get a perfect cameo of an old man at work on a Durga idol with a boy—a little lost— looking on. The withdrawn, intense world of the lonely child is created by Ray with the same sureness of touch as the loveliness of women unaware of their beauty. Felunath and his team enter Varanasi in a rickshaw. This Varanasi (for me at least) never was on land or sea. No, Ray has not glamourized it. He has looked at the break-down structures, the ghats, the sun on the Ganga, the bazar (glimpsed through the glimmer of necklaces and chains), the Victorian interiors of old Bengali houses, as no one has looked at them before. Whether he will make another Hindi film or not is very much an open question. But one can feel very distinctly here the ease, the gladness, almost the relief of an artist's spirit at play in home waters.

There is one scene, dominated by Utpal Dutt, which has the touch of pure genius. Utpal has been directed by both the masters of Bengali cinema—Ray and Ritwik Ghatak. Here he has given a matchless, controlled (and typically Utpal) self-mocking performance as the devious, cruel Maganlal. To frighten Felunath off the investigation, he invites the group to his house and puts up the unfortunate Jatayu against a board for some practice knife-throwing by an expert. The knife-thrower is a shuffling, snuffling, arthritic, nightmarish creature—a truly original creation. As he picks up each wicked-looking long knife and swayingly takes aim, we are on the seat's edge—Is he going to hit Jatayu by design or by mischance? A routine act is lifted to the realm of comic horror.

Ray's humanism comes out in the subtle mockery of ritual and irrationalism. Mr Ghoshal prizes the Ganesha as a work of art, not as a bounty giver. The sadhu is built up, with potent devotional music, as a charismatic figure before being exposed. In the context of the film, the three bhajans, charmingly sung by Reba Muhuri, serve as delightful, ironic comments. It is interesting to compare this treatment with the onslaught on ritual in two recent films—direct, as in Mrinal Sen's *Parasuram*, more complex, as in Benegal's *Kondura.*

IQBAL MASUD
Debonair, March 1979

Hirak Rajar Deshey

A sequel to a novel or a film written or made at the prompting of popular success of the first is risky business. The risk is greater in the case of a film because of its immediate response and therefore instant comparison. When the first is a magnificent children's film which held adults equally in thrall, a sequel can be dangerous ground, the lure of a repeat success obscuring the perils of the terrain. In *Hirak Rajar Deshey* Satyajit Ray covers the ground all right but not with assured ease and confident steps. That he does not trip up is because of his enormous creative talent and mastery over the medium. *Goopy Gyne* was an inspired film. Its sequel *Hirak Rajar Deshey*, made after a gap of more than ten years, is a display of inventive technicality. *Goopy Gyne* has the spontaneity of high poetic imagination marvellously realized in the complex medium of cinema. *Hirak Rajar Deshey* is entertaining, funny and tuneful but plainly a product of conscious effort.

After years of domesticity as regal sons-in-law Goopy and Bagha become restless. Wanderlust and the desire to sing and drum their way through unknown countries and strange kingdoms become irresistible. They warily test out if the magical pairs of shoes and the other two boons still work. They do. Reassured, Goopy and Bagha prepare to set out to taste once more the joys of freedom and adventure they had known in their earlier unbound days. An invitation from the diamond kingdom ruled by a tyrant (overplayed by Utpal Dutt) comes in handy and Goopy and Bagha get embroiled in the coils of oppression of the totalitarian State where a lone school teacher keeps precariously aloft the banner of revolt and protest against oppression and the king's devilish designs to keep his domain in a straitjacket insulated from ideas and non-conformist thought. The king takes to scientific brainwashing and book burning besides ruthlessly exploiting the workers at the diamond mines. The story unravels how Goopy and Bagha and the teacher (played somewhat awkwardly by Soumitra Chatterjee) foil the sinister designs of the king and win him over, *Rakta Karabi* fashion, to help them pull down the enormous statue of the king, symbolizing the victory of freedom over serfdom, liberty over totalitarian oppression.

The sets are opulent, the colour photography superb, the music a delight, the rhymed dialogue an inventive *tour de force,* the situations funny and fanciful. And yet the film does not attain the artistic wholeness one expects—even demands—from a film by Satyajit Ray.

Two things have been responsible for this. One, the casting. It is inescapable in a sequel, wherein lies the danger. Ray must have been fully alive to it and has skirted the problem by writing a story requiring as many new faces as possible. But how could he avoid having Robi Ghosh and Tapen Chatterjee cast in the main roles? Both have aged and in Robi Ghosh's case his custom has become stale and the sparkle gone. We laugh when he comes into the frame but more out of a reflex action than from the freshness of his comic acting. Even in the fantastic sequence of their encountering the tiger guarding the dark secrets, the suspense—and the fun—is more of the situation than of the comicality which Robi Ghosh could bring so effortlessly to his acting.

The second lies in the story which consciously strives to present contemporary ideological issues in a fantasy tale. Surely, in a film by a master like Satyajit Ray one expects the connection to be suggestive and subterranean and not obvious. Being so the film falters. Take, for instance, the book burning sequence or the sequences showing the scientist in his laboratory. Compare them with the battle scenes or the stunning dance sequence of the ghosts in *Goopy Gyne*, and one is painfully aware of the difference in the quality of imagination infusing the two films.

Hirak Rajar Deshey has enough of colour, fun, fantasy, music and poetry to cater for a couple of hours of beguiling entertainment. But they do not fuse to make a whole comparable to the many matchless 'entertainment' films Ray had earlier made.

[Because of the difficulty in obtaining 'one-rupee' tickets except at blackmarket prices, there has been an unusual delay in reviewing Satyajit Ray's film. Editor, *Frontier*]

KIRANMOY RAHA
Frontier, 14 February 1981

Gharey-Bairey

1

It's a different kind of love that Satyajit Ray's *Gharey-Bairey,* or *The Home and the World,* brings out, but it's love all right. Adapted from a novel that Rabindranath Tagore wrote in 1912 (Ray prepared a script for it in the forties, long before he made his first film, *Pather Panchali*), it deals with a great modern subject that has come up in Ray's work over and over: the emancipation of women, and what it does to them and to the men who love them. This is central to *Gharey-Bairey,* which is the story of the emergence of a young wife from the seclusion and ignorance of purdah into the complexities of becoming more fully human—or, at least, adult—and having choices. The core situation is much like the one in James Joyce's play *Exiles*—the husband, in his pride, wanting the wife to be free to be faithful—but that's only the film's starting point.

Victor Banerjee (the Dr Aziz of *A Passage to India*) is Nikhil, a maharajah in Bengal with a Western education and liberal views. His wife, Bimala (Swatilekha Chatterjee), is conventional in her beliefs, and is content to live in the women's quarters of his palace and be visible to no man except him. But he loves her and is proud of her, and wants her to be a modern woman, able to move in the world. She first saw him at their wedding: how will he ever know whether she really loves him if she doesn't have the opportunity to choose him—to prefer him to other men? For ten years, Bimala is taught by an English governess and encouraged to think for herself and develop her creativity. At last, in 1907, Nikhil persuades her to take the momentous walk with him down the corridor that leads from the women's apartment to the main rooms of the palace. There, in the drawing room, he introduces her to his friend, the handsome, fiery radical Sandip (Soumitra Chatterjee, the Apu of *The World of Apu,* and a principal actor in eleven other Ray films). And then the refined, uncoercive Nikhil watches passively—helplessly—as she becomes enthralled by Sandip's cocksure masculinity and his revolutionary rhetoric.

The movie is about the destruction of the marriage, and the riots and bloodshed caused by Sandip's terrorist supporters. It's a large theme—a double tragedy, in the home and in the world—presented in a formal style that owes almost nothing to the conventions of American or Western European films. The screen frame is almost square, and the scenes—most of them inside the rooms of the palace—are in deep, glowing colours. The main characters talk, and the camera just stays on them and waits until they finish, yet these conversations develop a heart-swelling intensity. In a sense, the method is like that of amateur moviemakers who think that all they need to do is put actors in a room and photograph them reading their lines as if they were on a stage. The difference is that Satyajit Ray, who has been making movies for thirty years, didn't start with this simplicity—he achieved it. His approach—the intimacy of his focussing on the actors in their setting—may be influenced by Ozu or late Dreyer, but it isn't remotely austere or ascetic. India takes care of that.

When you're inside the palace, there's a lot of India outside the windows. The home and the world are interpenetrating metaphors. The interiors seem to be lighted through stained-glass windows, and the colours, the fabrics, the way the actors move—everything is erotic, ambiguous, in the process of being transformed. The richness of the performances—those of Victor Banerjee and Swatilekha Chatterjee in particular—and the colours and textures of the interiors are like an electric field. The conversations in golden light and shadows have their own kind of voltage. You watch these graceful people in draped garments in their lethargic, patterned décor, and everything in the country seems draped, hanging, defeated—and hectic, too.

The story takes place during the chaotic aftermath of Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal into Muslim and Hindu states, when the nationalist movement that Sandip is part of is trying to impose a boycott against all foreign goods (by claiming that imports are at the root of Indian poverty). Yet Bimala is becoming educated—becoming free—by imbibing English traditions. When this Indian woman sings, in English, the song that she has been taught by her governess—'Tell me the tales that to me were so dear, Long long ago, long long ago'—the confusion of cultures is insanely poignant.

Bimala is girlish and coquettish in the early scenes in the women's

quarters, and part of the fascination of the movie is that Swatilekha Chatterjee grows with her role, and becomes more absorbing the longer you see her. She's not a mere ingénue; she's a full-bodied, rounded beauty, and her Bimala has an earthy, sensual presence. But Bimala and Nikhil obviously have no children, and we don't see them in passionate embraces, either. Nikhil's love for her seems more spiritual than physical.

For much of their ten-year-marriage, each time Nikhil suggests that Bimala leave purdah behind she looks down, smiling defensively. It isn't her compulsion; it's his. She doesn't want to come out of the women's quarters—all incense and silks, Arabian Nights cushions and English bric-à-brac. The rooms are stuffed—surfeited—with treasures; Bimala seems to emerge from inside a jewel. Maybe it's because the drive isn't hers that she's so overwhelmed by Sandip's fervour, and so easily taken in. Nikhil could guide her—could explain what the boycott is doing to the poor in the area. But he wants her to wise up by herself; he wants her to jump over the giant hurdle of growing up in ignorance, and see through the political line of a messiah like Sandip. He tells her to use her 'woman's intuition'—surely the last thing she should trust in making a choice between his passive principles and Sandip's ruthless magnetism. This gracious, recessive maharajah (with zero carnality) is the innocent one.

Nikhil seems almost to will the destruction of his marriage. We never get inside his kindness, his virtue, his high-mindedness—of his weakness. Yet this doesn't seem a defect in the film but, rather, part of its richness and its mystery. Towards the end, Bimala, who was wheedled into independence by her husband, becomes desperate to express that independence—recklessly, heedlessly. When it comes to truthfulness about women's lives, this great Indian moviemaker Satyajit Ray shames the American and European directors of both sexes.

PAULINE KAEL
The New Yorker, New York 1 July 1985

2 Gharey–Bairey : Talking History

In the Tagore novel, the *Home and the World (Gharey–Bairey)*, the jewel box of Bimala, the central character of the novel, plays an important role. We hardly see it in Satyajit Ray's *Gharey–Bairey* (shown as the closing film at the 10th International Film Festival of India). But the film itself is a jewel box, its ornaments gleaming, reflecting such hues that the mind races in different directions. I thrilled to this film from the first shot to the last. It dredged up—rather liberated—half-forgotten memories, fugitive remembrances which one assumed had died long ago. And behind it all was the measured beat of great, continuing, perhaps permanent, tragedy.

The film is a major work. It would be impertinent to assess it in a single article. Such a work can best be approached piecemeal. What follows is an attempt in this direction. It is not a review of the film. It is an attempt to reflect on the world of Bimala, Nikhil and Sandip, the main protagonists, and its relevance—wrought with a kind of invisible magicality by Ray—to our life today.

Some basic premises are necessary. The first is the rendering of the text into film. Ray has done for Tagore what Schloendorff, the German filmmaker, has done for Proust in his *Swann in Love* (also shown at the festival). Schloendorff's credo is set out in his notes to the film : 'When it comes to literature, I shed my inhibitions a long time ago. While it is impossible to transpose an author's style to the screen, it is both exciting and possible to rediscover what motivated him to write in a particular way and to redirect this energy into the film.'

I think this is true of Ray's filmic transition.

The other premise has reference to Ray's choice of this particular period (the first decade of this century) for a major effort. It is summed up in the following answer to a query of mine by critic Henri Micciollo : 'Ray's attractive quality—this is a personal statement—is that he is a man who feels very much at home in the past but tries hard to catch up with the present. This is painful to him because, for him, the present is disintegration. According to Ray, all his films are art-organized. His strongly structured films fit a society that is strongly structured. Ray's cinema is a cinema of honesty. He never cheats. The problem Ray faces is how to use art which assumes a strong structure to analyse today's society, which is corrupt and in disintegration. His early films are not pessimistic. His present films are.'

Gharey–Bairey is a special case. It was made in the '80s but it refers back to three quarters of a century ago (1905). It is fascinating to compare it with *Charulata* (1964) which referred still farther back to 1879. In *Charulata* there was a lightness, a romance which was heart-rending and yet heart-delighting. *Gharey–Bairey*, on the other hand, is stately and graceful but it is also sombre. It is not merely that the Tagore novel is different. It is also that the filmmaker is now

deeply affected by the stubbornness of things, the destructive nature of historical forces, the cynicism of the manipulators and the ineffectiveness of the good. 'The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.' Where Ray differs from Yeats is in his belief that the 'best'—Bimala and Nikhil—can create conviction out of the fire of the experience of real freedom.

At the heart of *Gharey–Bairey* is a great debate about Indian history—its past, its present and its future. There is also also a great love story which also becomes a debate about the nature of love in the Indian context—especially the Indian middle class context which has not radically changed since 1905. The novel is rather verbose. Worse, in the English translation by Tagore himself, there are purple passages and oddities. If my memory serves me right, EM Forster jibed at : 'Passion rises superior to its defilement and needs no Pears soap to wash it clean.' When I was re-reading the novel after twenty years, I was brought up short by : 'I can hear the flute which is playing, its fountain of melody gushing forth from the flute stops of separation.' I know it will all sound different in Bengal (it is time someone brought out a modern version), but, all the same, Ray has rendered a great service both to cinema and to Tagore by 'transcreating' the purple patches into a smooth flow of dialogue, monologue and voice-over.

It is necessary to understand the framework of the historical debate. Husband Nikhil, wife Bimala and 'outsider' Sandip are really 'talking history' throughout the film in a very contemporary sense. They lay bare the whole skein of the issues which both propped up and threatened their lives—as they do ours. You have to do a bit of homework before you go to see the film. The year in which the film is set—1905—was a kind of watershed in the history of our country. It brought out into the open the deeper conflicts and tensions of the Indian national movement and revealed traits which govern our politics today. *Gharey–Bairey*—both book and film—provides an incomparable vantage point for viewing the explosion.

Bengal's first partition reinforced both the Swadeshi movement and Muslim separatism. These issues are woven into the triangle of Bimala—Nikhil—Sandip. Bimala, the devoted housewife of a seemingly placid zamindar, Nikhil, is kindled both sexually and politically by the revivalist nationalism of the political leader, Sandip. Nikhil's questioning of Sandip's motives from a humanist point of view appears spineless to Bimala. Somewhere in the film, she says, 'It sends a shiver down my spine,' referring collectively to *Bande Mataram*, to the Swadeshi movement and to the political and sexual aggression of Sandip. But more of that a little later.

All the three are children of the Bengal renaissance which produced the apparently contradictory streams of social reform, the drive towards national uniformity and integrity, a harking back to the glories of the past, a love of the arts, a puritan ethic and a kind of unprincipled hedonism. It was a marvellous and diverse feast—perhaps the richest in Indian history. The ambiguities of the Bengal renaissance, the bitter and sometimes self-destroying argument that was a part of it, have never been captured better in cinema than they have in this film.

There was another side to this dazzling spectacle. 'In relation to it,' says Nirad C Chaudhuri in his *Autobiography of the Unknown Indian,* 'the Muslims stood outside as an external proletariat. The nationalist movement brought about an accentuation of the difference.' That, too, is illuminated by Ray. The absence of Muslims from the feast is made a reason for the indictment of the very society which this film celebrates. 'The Mussalman' becomes a Caliban who wears down the liberal soul of Nikhil. 'When I see the gigantic catastrophe of Hindu-Muslim discord,' says Chaudhuri, 'I am not surprised because we as children held the tiny mustard seed in our hand and sowed it very diligently.' Ray's nuanced but very different handling of this phenomenon raises it to a level unequalled by any other Indian film.

All the issues raised by the film are encompased in the Bimala—Nikhil—Sandip triangle. One way of approaching this triangle is the 'non-secular' one (never totally absent from Tagore's thought). Here again, let me call up Chaudhuri (whose *Autobiography* can be read as a cultural sub-text of the film) : 'The Hindu religious tradition recognizes three equally legitimate modes of worshipping god : first, through knowledge; second, through action, and lastly, through love.' In a very crude but valid sense, Nikhil stands for 'knowledge,' Sandip for 'action', Bimala for 'love'.

Bimala is central both to the novel and to the film. The novel takes the shape of 'stories' from the point of view of each of the three protagonists. The conflicting viewpoints contribute to the dramatic tension of the novel which is brought to harmony in Bimala's last story: 'I have passed through fire. What was inflammable has been burnt to ashes. What is left is deathless.' It is Ray's achievement that in the film these viewpoints slide effortlessly into each other. The seamless whole, in fact, becomes Bimala's story entirely. It begins

with ' I have passed through fire' and ends with it. Bimala, in a sense, is the arbiter of the tale — a slight change of emphasis from the novel, and in my opinion all to the good.

The choice of Swatilekha Chatterji for the role of Bimala has been criticised. Of course, you could have had a younger Madhabi Mukherjee, Suchitra Sen or Aparna Sen. They would have brought to the part a flame of beauty, sensuousness and sheer desirability. But they would have been out of place in this film. Ray sees Bimala as a woman conscious of her lack of beauty. In a revealing sentence in the novel (not in the film), Bimala says of her marriage : 'My husband's face was not of a kind that one's imagination would place in fairyland. It was dark, even as mine was. The feeling of shrinking which I had about my own lack of physical beauty was lifted a little; at the same time a touch of regret was left lingering.'

It is this 'touch of regret' that haunts Swatilekha's face in the film. It makes her impatient with her placid husband, relentless in his search of truth. One may contrast her performance with that of Madhabi Mukherjee in *Charulata*. Madhabi's Eden is in the past with those wind-wafted boats on the river, though she finds her playmate in the present. Swatilekha's Eden is the orgiastic one of the future. She has 'no patience with patience.' She says she is 'only human.' Which means she hungers—for what? Obviously, for physical vigour, for the rampant passion which she finds in Sandip. But there is a kind of self-deception here. The hungers of the flesh are transformed into a passion for earthly immortality : the ordinary, domestic wife would be the Shakti of the motherland. That is the role in which Sandip casts her and that is the role she plays.

The role-playing of Bimala is one of the central points of the film as was the role-playing of Chitrangada in an earlier play of Tagore. The concept of a 'role' is seen differently by the three protagonists. Bimala throws herself into her roles as the worshipful wife, as the queen bee, as Shakti, and as mother to Amulya, Sandip's fiery disciple. Nikhil's whole point of existence is to avoid roles just as the whole point of Sandip's life is to play them disdainfully. In this 'playing' and 'non-playing' of roles, Ray gets perfect performances from Swatilekha Chatterji, Victor Banerji and Soumitra Chatterji.

It is true that sensuousness does erupt into a flame between Swatilekha and Soumitra as it does between Madhabi and Soumitra in *Charulata*. One reason could be that whereas desire *per se* existed in *Charulata*, 'desire' in *Ghare–Baire* is not disinterested. It is mixed up, on Bimala's part, with the ambition to play Shakti for the motherland and on Sandip's part, with designs on Bimala's money.

But a major reason is that for Ray, Bimala becomes an instrument to express the graceful but tragic flow of time. There is just a touch of vulnerability, of fragility to Swatilekha's performance to ensure this. When Swatilekha walks from one end of the room to the other, first passing frosted glass and then an open window leading on to a bare ground with a few coconut trees, humming the song taught to her by Miss Gilby, 'Long, long ago, long, long ago', one's heart turns over. Bimala's life as seen by Ray is like a Hardy lyric : 'Time and the passing of time, love and the fading of love.'

Nikhil, Bimala's 'patient' husband, is a zamindar, a liberal with a tortured conscience. Like Tiresias, he has fore-suffered all. He had been a Swadeshi before the Swadeshi movement started, had tried local manufacture and failed. His sadness comes from the fact that he is a nationalist, not a Nationalist. He can work for a cause, he cannot believe in the cause. In a sense, Bimala, Nikhil and Sandip are archetypes of historical persons and the common people today. Nikhil represents what a liberal called the Cobbett tradition : 'A concern for individual welfare . . . which is much dependent on organization and has no objection to hierarchies and aristocracies. The State is an organic growth, not a product of theory. The tradition believes in a society based on rights, obligations and private property. It is anti-imperialistic. It is suspicious of the *declasse* and the *deracine*. Men should be rooted in their country and their community. Firmly planted on their property, small men can resist both tyranny and the snares of the slippery rootless manipulators.'

I think that passage pretty well sums up the credo of Nikhil—and, perhaps, suitably updated, the credo of Ray himself. This creed makes Nikhil protect his poor Muslim tenant traders dealing in foreign goods against Sandip's revivalist nationalism. It makes him refuse, in one of the noblest passages in the film, 'to accept India in the abstract as a goddess or a god.' 'Never seek to tell thy love,' Nikhil seems to say with Blake. 'Love told can never be.' Work in your own way to serve the country you hold dear, do not elevate her into a goddess. So Nikhil, true to his own cause, goes to his death trying to pacify the communal rioters on his estate who have been aroused by Sandip.

In his relationship with Bimala, Nikhil follows the same principle : 'She has been a devoted wife because she had known no man but me. I shall set her free and see if she comes back to me.' This very attitude, meant to perfect Bimala as a being, is taken by

Bimala to be an act of prosaic weakness. She is eagerly seized by Sandip. A complex situation is worked out as a kind of duel where Bimala has to weigh 'knowledge' against 'power.' If the final resolution in Nikhil's favour looks like a sleight of hand, the fault is Tagore's.

Victor Banerji plays Nikhil with tortured perfection. I think he now belongs to the gallery of the great heroes of Ray.

I have always felt that Sandip as the dynamic knave of the novel has had a rough deal. He talks a lot about himself in the novel, and that dilutes both his credibility and his integrity as an artistic creation. Here again, Ray lifts the character to a level above the book. Viewers may be in for a slight shock when they see Soumitra here, if they set him against the character he played in *Apur Sansar*. The lyrical, lost look is gone, the emphasis is on coarseness and power. It is an excellent portrait, particularly in the earlier sequences where Sandip sets Bimala on fire with his presence and his singing. I am not quite happy with the mephistophilian sequences showing his drive to power or the Machiavellian sequences showing him as a calculating villain. But the abruptness is in the book, and Ray has not quite resolved it.

A wider issue arises. Nikhil and Sandip represent two opposite strands of the Bengal renaissance—humanism and a power-oriented drive which can harness revivalism when needed. These are also strands of our recent history. Gandhiji, Savarkar, Bose, Patel, Nehru and Indira Gandhi can be seen as figures in whom this struggle continued and was never quite resolved. I think one aspect of *Ghare–Bairey's* importance is that it presents this debate in human, cinematic terms. On the whole, it is fair and balanced. I say 'on the whole' because justice has not quite been done to Sandip. He is a cad, of course. But he has been seen from a superior 'civilized' point of view. E M Forster dealt more acutely with the Italian poet and liberation fighter, Gabriele d'Annunzio, a near contemporary and alter ego of Sandip : 'His heroism was histrionic and his caddishness was not an aristocratic freak but innate in his bones and bowels. (The Englishman) refuses to admit that an ill-bred egoist can be a genius and a leader of men, and suspects shoddiness because there is no underlying moral worth.' Tagore and Ray have looked at Sandip with 'English' eyes and failed to explore that rich ambiguity in our culture which led to Nathuram Godse on the one side and the Naxalites on the other.

Despite this, *Ghare–Bairey* enfolds you like a 'luminous envelope,' to use a phrase of Virginia Woolf's. Stunned at the end of a first viewing, I thought : This really is our life : sweet and beautiful, tragic and terrible. Ray has once again evoked our tradition (to quote Proust on his) : 'at once ancient and direct, unbroken, oral, deformed, unrecognizable, alive.'

IQBAL MASUD
Indian Express Magazine, 3 February 1985

Shakha-Prashakha

1 The heartbeat of time passing

Who will save us? Who will heal our wounded humanity? How shall we regain sanity and, above all, peace? These are the questions *Shakha Prashakha* raises with compassion, yet urgency. Time passes on. Irretrievably. No answer is imposed. However, elements of answers are offered. When the branches are detached from the tree, they can do nothing. Estranged from their father, the Prabirs of the world will gamble life away and the Prabodhs will cheat. Each of them will consider himself a success. Only those who stay in vital communion with the tree can acknowledge their mediocrity: they are saved by humility.

Since *Ganashatru*, the films of Satyajit Ray are more than ever before direct statements emanating from a man who has undergone deep experiences. Not only are these later films informed by the experience Mr Ray had of illness, but they vibrate with the thoughts that preoccupy him more forcefully after that illness. *Ganashatru* was concerned with environment and fundamentalism of all sorts, but it was first of all a hymn to life and to creativity. After recovering from a heart attack Ray was again able to communicate, to create. Perhaps

none of his previous films had been so deeply personal. *Shakha Prashakha* features a seventy year old man who, at the peak of his fame, has a heart attack and recovers. But he recovers to what? To the discovery of corruption around him. Moral turpitude, a sort of illness from which, it would seem, one cannot recover.

All of Satyajit Ray's films are very personal. But previously it was the creative impulse that found its expression in films of relevance. Now, in his seventies, Ray is seized with the urge to express his thoughts. His means of expression or language being 'film', the appropriate film form emerges to convey these thoughts.

One could argue, as indeed Ray himself has done in an interview, that he had long ago, when he was hardly forty-five, imagined the story of Ananda Majumdar. And hence the personal aspect of *Shakha Prashakha* should not be exaggerated. True. On the other hand, it is now that Ray has made that film. And am I wrong in finding in elderly Ananda (Ajit Bandyopadhyay) a facial resemblance with Ray? Be this as it may, the critic has to be clear as to what he wishes to achieve: a biography of the filmmaker through a scrutiny of his films or a 'reading' of his films against the background of the director's private life and in the context of contemporary social life. The two, personal experience and films, cannot be separated. But ever since film criticism has taken a semiological orientation, critics have preferred to see films in themselves. They seek to 'read' meaning in films in the context of the social discourse of which films are a part. Whether or not a particular meaning was intended by the creator of a film is a matter that pertains to his biography, not to film criticism as such. The fact is, a filmmaker is always greater than his film, because no artwork can fully encompass the personality of its creator. On the other hand, the significance of a film is always greater than whatever a filmmaker has wanted it to be, because significance is infinite. However, the test of the validity of a reading is whether it can be communicated and shared. One may not read a film the way a critic does but one can come to see the sense inherent in his reading. Even filmmaker Jean Renoir said that he learnt about his films from critic André Bazin.

Ganashatru dealt with the external environment. *Shakha Prashakha* deals with the internal environment of the men and women of our time. The film examines the human values that make life worth living and without which there is no peace, whether in society or in each one's heart. These values are lost or enhanced according to the type of relationships men and women entertain not only with so-called 'nature' but also among themselves, and especially in relation to women.

When I said earlier that Ray seems more concerned with saying things than with creating forms, however relevant, I certainly did not mean that the present films are not well crafted. I mean that the primary impulse seems to be different. Form flows as if effortlessly in the service of thought. In *Shakha Prasakha* once the stage is set, as it were, the film takes off and proceeds, in marvellous film terms. Ray, at his best, describes the Majumdars' relationships vividly and subtly. There are open conversations at table, there are more intimate conversations in the sleeping rooms. Each couple's relationship and each person's relationship with the others are directly projected. What immediately appears is the estrangement of all. The four sons are estranged from each other—and two of them from their wives—to the extent that they are estranged from their father. Prashanta who seems completely alienated is, in fact, in deep communion with each and all of them. At the beginning he wonders whether his brothers should not have come to celebrate their father's birthday. He is also acutely aware of what is happening to his father: he will be sick, but he will recover, he feels. And at the end of the film, when Dingo innocently discloses to his grandfather that corruption has crept into the family, Prashanta immediately foresees the devastating effect of that disclosure on his father and he comes to his help.

I cannot help seeing this film as an illustration of the words of Christ: 'I am the true vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.' (*John* 15, verse 5). Let nobody misunderstand me. I am not saying that Satyajit Ray has wanted to make a commentary of this scriptural verse. I just say that I read the film against the background of that verse, and as a result the film is the more meaningful to me. In the Bengali rendering of the words of Christ, the term 'shakhaprashakha' is used to translate 'you are the branches.'

In a corrupt world, one way of maintaining one's integrity is to take refuge in the purity of music. But one cannot hope to take refuge in music and still live in this turbulent world. Such a solution would only lead to complete detachment, and therefore, to a form of madness. Prashanta illustrates this tendency lived to its ultimate consequence. This renders him unfit for work, the ultimate value of Ananda's Victorian universe. Prabodh feels that Prashanta should be sent to a mental hospital. But Pratap too, in the eyes of both Prabodh and Prabir, has done something 'mad' in leaving his job because he

found corruption there. Even Ananda is not exempt from failure. If we are to believe Pratap, in years past, Ananda was more preoccupied with 'work' than with love for his sons. In a way, Ananda too was 'mad': work was music to him. He is not the trunk of the tree, but only a main branch.

By the end of the film it is evident that sanity lies in neither work as worship nor honesty as a rule of life, but in love. Prabodh does not love. At the end of the film, when he takes leave of his father and puts his hand in that of the ailing man he does not communicate love: and he leaves his father sad as never before. But when Prashanta places his hand in that of his father on the latter's chest, he communicates love and a profound peace. When one loves, one is at peace with the world and with oneself.

Often during the film Prashanta is seen listening to music—of Bach, we are told. At one point, when Pratap and Dr De discuss the case of Prashanta, the latter is listening to the Gregorian chant of 'Kyrie Eleison' (Lord have mercy). I am thankful to Ray for having refrained from making of his film a 'musical'. We have just enough music to sense the atmosphere of joy and peace in which Prashanta takes refuge. At the end of the film, the Bach music lingers in our minds until, perhaps, it fades into the 'Kyrie Eleison.' For, indeed, who will save us? Who will heal our wounded humanity?

GASTON ROBERGE S.J.
12 January 1992

2 A Ray at the end of the tunnel

'Iqbal, you will love this film.' That's how Satyajit Ray concluded his scene by scene 'preview' of his latest film *Shakha–Prashakha* (Branches and Twigs) while talking to me a few months ago (excerpts from the interview have already appeared in this column).

I have found that when artists talk this way, they are generally right. I came to IFFI '91 at Madras primarily to see the Ray film —the closing film of the festival on January 20. After the crowds, the traffic jams, the rich scent of the softly flowing Cooum remembered from student days 40 years ago. I was richly rewarded. *Shakha –Prashakha* is the film of IFFI '91 for me.

It's not possible to do justice to a film like this in a festival review. The film is an attempt to squeeze the essence of the Indian contemporary existence and roll it into a ball. Inevitably cracks appear in such a structure. Specially because there's a film behind the film, an order of existence vastly different from our highest moral aspirations.

The film is said to be about 'corruption' that is part of our daily life. It's that of course. There are lots of echoes in this film. Some of the clearest come from *Seemabaddha. Pratidwandi, Jana Aranya* —tales of 'New Brahmins' (Chidananda Dasgupta) fleeing from or succumbing to the industrial/urban corruption. The structure of this film has an organic relationship to its predecessor.

Ananda Mohan Majumdar is the archetypal meritorious and honest labourer in the vineyard of Orient Mica Works, Anandpur, who rose to be its general manager. Ten years after retirement Majumdar suffers a heart attack at the age of 70 in January 1990. This is the start of a moral odyssey—the clash of values of the father and two of his four children. (The clan has to gather to attend on the convalescing father). The two are Prabodh, general manager of a big company, and Prabir, a businessman. Both have played with black money. Prabir has the additional distinction of being a gambler and cheater on his wife, Tapti (Mamta Shankar). Pratap, the youngest, has just resigned his job in a private company because of corruption and joined the last resort of honest but defeated *bhadralok* —the theatre. One son, mentally handicapped as the result of an accident, Prashanta (Soumitra Chatterjee), stays with the father, hears secret harmonies and recorded music (Bach *et al*). He becomes a kind of commentator on the protagonists and their battle.

Simplistic, black and white moral opposition? For the '70s—'90s generation, probably yes. It is possible to find Majumdar's generation idealized, moralized, a trifle quaint, even comical. Perhaps rather smug and complacent too. Was the first half of the twentieth century as great as all that?

In a sense the film anticipates this criticism. Majumdar is presented in a marvellously understated fashion by the unstable Prashanta.

Yet the importance of Majumdar is not in the credibility or otherwise of the 'Victorian' in the depraved '90s. We would have created Majumdar if he had not existed. Our middle class angst, self-hatred and alienation has reached such a pitch that we clutch at the shadow of a shadow. That is the whole point of this seemingly 'humanistic' but actually ruthlessly exploratory film.

Does Prashanta as the 'liberated' point of moral reference come off? I think so primarily because of the way Soumitra has been directed. His sudden rages, his bitter, unhinged, but disturbing remarks form a brilliant counterpoint to the middle class self-centredness of the two 'working' brothers whose life routine has been

invaded by the father's vulnerable mortality. He reminds me of the idiot boy in the *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* who's the only one to look after the dying Judy.

There's the fugitive, shifting, swaying, half-sensual, half-platonic bond between Tapti and bachelor Pratap (Ranjit Mullick), her brother-in-law. This is one of Ray's best efforts in this line since *Charulata*. Mamata Shankar is growing with each Ray film. I look forward to a solo role under the magic touch.

The most startling element in the film is the role of the 93-year-old father of Majumdar. He makes ghostly/ghastly appearances before his grandchildren till he is roughly carried off by his caretaker. It is impossible to do justice to Ray's depiction of the 'metaphysical' aspect of ageing—Donne's and Webster's 'skull beneath the skin,' the 'leaning back in lipless grin.' Somewhere T E Lawrence pays a despairing tribute to E M Forster's passing over the landscape of life as impassively as a cloud. So does Ray pass over the landscape of disintegration—'our future self'.

Shakha–Prashakha is a unique experience.

IQBAL MASUD
Indian Express Magazine, 3 February 1991

Agantuk

1 The Bison

'I find myself trying, through my films, to trace the underlying pattern that binds this life together.'— Satyajit Ray. [1]

'The pattern that connects.'—Gregory Bateson.

Satyajit Ray's last film, *Agantuk*, is one of the six features for which he wrote original stories. It is perhaps the film in which he expresses himself most openly. It is the film that deals with the largest subject, namely, contemporary civilization. Above all, *Agantuk* is a summative film in which Ray has wanted, as it were, to complete a number of projects. I can hope, therefore, to touch upon only some of the aspects of the film, well aware that there are other important aspects which, I trust, other writers will discuss.

Agantuk and The Alien

In an interview he had with him, Andrew Robinson had asked Ray if there was any relationship between *Ganashatru* and *The Alien*, the film Ray had planned to make in the mid-sixties. Robinson saw some common elements, like the temple, the journalist, the nexus between religion and money, the Bajoria character . . . Ray's answer: 'It hadn't occurred to me at all . . . But now you mention it I can see the point.' [2] I am sure Ray would see the point if I were to ask him like Robinson: 'Would I be right in saying you've put some of *The Alien* in *Agantuk*?' Manomohan Mitra does not come on earth from a distant planet, but he sees the world from the point of view of an outsider, which is what he has become as a result of living among so-called primitive people. Like the Alien, Mitra is benevolent. For, Ray has made this his last filmed character[3] not altogether an Alien, but a stranger, a new comer, and even a loving 'uncle.' The 'agantuk' is closer to people than the Alien. For although Mitra left his immediate family thirty-five years ago, he has always remained with people, in search of what makes them human.

Probing into contemporary civilization

Like the Alien, Mitra is able, so it seems, to read other people's thoughts. Above all, like the Alien, he has eyes to see. To see through, to see into, to see large . . . in other words, to probe into contemporary civilization.

Probing is for Ray the fundamental task of the artist. In 1957, writing about the making of *Pather Panchali* he stated what was and remained his objective: to observe and probe, to catch the revealing details, the telling gestures, the particular turns of speech . . . The more you probed the more was revealed, and familiarity bred not contempt but love, understanding, tolerance. [4]

All the Ray films have been probes into 'reality', they all lead to understanding, tolerance and love. This is true especially of *Agantuk*. Ray had given the Alien special eyes to probe into the world around him. He gave Manomohan powers of perception that come from a

long experience of observing people of cultures different from one's own, especially simple people like children or like tribals. Coming back to Calcutta after a long absence Manomohan can share the results of his probing into contemporary civilization. The probing is ruthless: (*a*) the damaging effect of money (a theme explored in *Kanchenjunga*, *Nayak*, *The Alien* . . .), (*b*) the stupidity of war *(Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne)*, (*c*) the true meaning of civilization, (*d*) various aspects of Bengali culture. like food, hospitality, music, 'adda', (*e*) the faith in each other w ich makes love possible and human life worth living, and above all (*f*) the wonderful complexity of the world.

The underlying pattern that binds this life together

In *Agantuk* 'the underlying pattern that binds this life together' or 'the pattern that connects,' to use Gregory Bateson's phrase, is shown to be a common experience of life. Anila (the niece) recognizes that Manomohan is her uncle when the latter sings to her a song of her childhood. Conversely, the uncle recognizes Anila as his niece when she responds to the tribal dance and joins in. The identity provided by family blood relationships and established by documents like a passport is not at all sufficient. What binds this life together and, finally, what binds people together, is the common experience they have of life. There may be a touch of romanticism in Ray's setting the recognition by Mitra of the humanness of his niece in the surroundings of Santiniketan, among tribals. Ray, after all, is a city man. And he is well aware of this. This awareness has made *Pather Panchali* possible. The curiosity and wonder of Durga and Apu at the train and the telegraph wires is the reverse of Ray's own wonder in front of village life. However, Ray does not suggest that everyone has to actually go to a village. What he does affirm is that a certain 'wanderlust' (to use a German word—used in English, we are told!), a 'depaysement' (to use a French word, *not* used in English, I say), a going out of one's own mental universe, a certain disorientation, a freedom from one's artificial moorings, are required.

Ray's life project: to be a filmmaker

I said that in *Agantuk* Ray has completed several projects. His main life project was, of course, to be a filmmaker. He enunciated this project lucidly in 1948 in an article entitled, significantly, 'What is wrong with Indian Films.' An article which comes six years before Francois Truffaut's belligerent and generally wrong-headed piece, 'A certain tendency of the French cinema'. When Ray wrote 'What's wrong with Indian Films,' he was hardly 27 years old, he had not yet made any film, he had not yet met Jean Renoir in Calcutta. His article can be seen in retrospect as the 'manifesto' on which is based his entire film work and which he never betrayed. It was not just one of those youthful statements which greater reflection prompts one to forget and for which one can be forgiven. Ray formulated his programme against the background of Indian films at the time. He wrote:

> (what is needed) is not more gloss, but more imagination, more integrity and a more intelligent appreciation of the limitation of the medium. [5]

Above all 'a drastic simplification of style and content' will be needed. This will be achieved if the filmmaker 'keeps his eyes open and his ears.' For 'the raw material of the cinema is life itself.' [6]

In an article of 1951, he had also written:

> For a popular medium, the first kind of inspiration should derive from life and have its roots in it. No amount of technical polish can make up for artificiality of theme and dishonesty of treatment. *The Indian film-maker must turn to life, to reality.* [7]

In *Agantuk* Ray resolutely turned to life, to the reality he could see around him. Earlier on he had explored the theme of an eventual film, *The Alien*. That film was never made. *Agantuk* is a reflection on the same theme, but at a more profound level. *The Alien* would have been fun with wisdom as a bonus. *Agantuk* is much fun too but wisdom is the main ingredient. One might say that in certain respects *Agantuk* is to *The Alien* what *Gharey–Bairey* is to *Charulata*. But the last two films are Tagore's, the first two were Ray's own conceptions.

The return of the hero

A thematic approach to the film can be complemented by a morphologic approach on the lines proposed by Vladimir Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1927). As some critics have noted already, *Agantuk* reveals itself to be a tale dealing with 'the return of the hero.' This pattern of story usually implies that the hero has to undergo certain tests. So does Manomohan Mitra in *Agantuk*. Perhaps it was befitting that a film advocating a return to the source of humanness be expressed in a basic story form that is perhaps universal. But a reflection on these lines, however interesting, should not obscure the fact that the Apu trilogy too involves a 'return of the hero' after many a test. Apu, indeed, comes back to Nishchindipur, his natal village, with his child, Kajal. Apu surely sees the village in a new way, for he has matured. Mitra returns to Calcutta, but his

return is to Santiniketan. This is a return of Ray as well. But strikingly, Mitra does not go to Tagore's school of art. He goes to a Santali village. Ray must have been aware of the numerous implications of Mitra's return to Santiniketan. From an autobiographical point of view, Ray sides with Mitra. For, in spite of his fine teachers at Santiniketan, Ray discovered Indian art in contemplating frescoes at Ajanta. Similarly, Mitra who too was an art student discovered the source of what Tagore called 'the human heritage' in the bison of Altamira. Another implication of Mitra's going to Santiniketan but not to Tagore's school is that, bypassing Tagore as a secondary source, Ray goes to a primary source, the Santali village. Ray had hesitated to join Tagore's school. He felt himself to be too much of a city man. It is as if he said in *Agantuk*, 'if I must go out of Calcutta to Santiniketan, I may as well go straight to a tribal village.'

Why a Bison?

Is it not striking that Mitra, the Indian, should be so deeply impressed by a drawing of a bison? Of course, the bison of Altamira is an extraordinary depiction of a living animal. But Ray could surely have used another masterpiece with a similar effect. Why a bison? And what can the bison's connotations be? Historians of religions tell us that there are at least two sorts of deities, those in the sky, labelled ouranian, and those on or in the earth, the chthonian ones. The bison is biologically related to the cow. The cow is an earthly animal protected by a chthonian god, Shrikrishna. The latter is associated with the aboriginal (Latin 'ab origine' means 'from the origin') people as contrasted to the invaders and colonizers, who worshipped an ouranian deity, Indra. The bison, in a word, has pre-Aryan connotations. The return to the sources suggested by Ray is indeed radical.

The threshold of mystery

There is a sequence in *Agantuk* which is as important as it is gratuitous. Gratuitous because it does not seem to do much to advance the action, perhaps not even to reveal Manomohan Mitra's character. It is the scene when Mitra has gone out on the Maidan with Satyaki and his young friends. The scene is important because it reveals a concern of Ray: the mystery, the wonder it evokes. Cinema had helped Ray to discover, as he put it already in 1963, that

> Although you have roots here—in Bengal, in India— you are at the same time part of a large plan, a universal pattern. This uniqueness and this universality and the co-existence of the two, is what I mainly try to convey through my films. [8]

Sitting on the Maidan Mitra explains to his captivated audience the phenomenon of eclipses. It takes a good two and a half minutes of film time to lead the children to the point where they realize that they cannot explain a complete lunar eclipse. And they are told emphatically that nobody can explain the occurrence. Mitra calls this 'magic', in a language that children can grasp. But he is himself fascinated. He exclaims: 'I am telling you, of all the wonders of the world, this is the greatest. The sun and the moon, the king of the day and the queen of the night, the shadow of our planet on the moon, and the three heavenly bodies are like three discs of the same size!' Even if you call this magic, I am not sure it will hold the attention of children for a long time. The subject is somewhat austere. It is as if Ray needed an opportunity to express his own sense of wonder. A sense that has grown over the years and led him to the threshold of mystery and of transcendence. Ray, who might be described as an agnostic, had nonetheless an open mind. He was struck by the complexity of things, like the human body, or of events, like the lunar eclipse. These, it seems, cannot occur by accident. In fact, whether you explain it by positing a transcendental force or by admitting the possibility of an immanent accident, there is room for wonder. For, the chances of such accidents happening are almost nil. And yet they occur. In his interview of November 1988 with Andrew Robinson, while speaking about his coming film *Ganashatru* and the belief of the masses in the power of 'holy water', he said:

> Doctors generally in my experience believe in God, for instance. They pray. My own doctor, my house-physician, says that if you inspect the human body—the incredible complexity of it—you have to believe in a superior force. It can't just happen by accident. [8]

Ray, continuator of Tagore

Ray did for Bengali cinema what Tagore had done for Bengali literature. Ray felt akin to Tagore in many ways. This is nowhere shown as strongly as when Ray made his documentary film *Rabindranath Tagore* (1961), a tribute to the great poet, philosopher and educationist. The opening lines of Ray's film applies to Ray himself with prophetic accuracy thirty years ahead of time:

> On 7th August 1941, in the city of Calcutta, a man died. His mortal remains perished [on the funeral pyre, GR] but he left behind him a heritage which no fire could

> consume. It is a heritage of words and music and poetry, of ideas and of ideals. And it has the power to move us, to inspire us, today and in the days to come. We who owe him so much salute his memory.

Over the years, Ray had assumed a unique role in Bengali cultural life by his cultural impact, by his personal, deep, emotional links with Tagore, and by his fine adaptations of Tagore's literary works onto the screen. He had earned the right not only to translate Tagore into film terms but to interpret him in terms of his own sensitivity. At the end of *Rabindranath Tagore*, Ray had quoted the ending lines of Tagore's magisterial lecture, *Crisis in Civilization* (1941):

> I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to leave the world that faith has deserted me. I look around and see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet, I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in man. I shall look forward to a new dawn, to a new chapter of history when the holocaust will end, and the air will be rendered clean by a spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps the dawn will come from this horizon, from the East, where the sun rises.
>
> On that day, the unvanquished man retraces his past of conquest, surmounting all barriers, to win back his last human heritage.

These lines read well as lines by Tagore. But one cannot imagine Ray uttering as his own the second part of the quotation, from 'Perhaps the dawn will come from this horizon . . .' till the end. There is here a sentimental turn, an eccentric flight into the poetic which, I am sure, Ray could not make his. Yet, in spite of this, *Agantuk* has always been to me Ray's equivalent of Tagore's *Crisis in Civilization*. When he is 'about to leave the world,' his faith in civilization issuing from the heart of Europe, if he ever held it, has deserted Ray. Faith in the present civilization itself, as he sees it, with its corruption, with its diversion away from the sources of life, has deserted him. Like Tagore, Ray does not lose faith in man. But for him man is not an abstract, universal, man, seen in the future. The repository of Ray's faith are the men, the women and the youths of today. In *Agantuk*, it is a present day woman who can sway to the rhythm of a tribal dance. Ray is concerned, above all, with interpersonal relationships and with concrete people's response to life. He goes much further than Tagore. For Ray, it is not enough to see that light is not forthcoming from the West, it is not enough to turn to the East (which Ray himself had done when he discovered Indian art in a contemplation of the frescoes of Ajanta). For Ray it is necessary to ascend to the very source of humanity, of humanness, symbolized by the bison fresco of Altamira. What matters to Ray is the quality of the perception a human person has of life. The Altamira fresco proves that so-called pre-historic man was more and better sensitive to life than contemporary men and women. Yet, the hero of *Agantuk*, and in him, Satyajit Ray, do not despair. In *Ganashatru* Dr Ashoke Gupta discovers that he can have faith in the youth. Manomohan Mitra discovers that he can have faith in his niece. Humanness in her has not completely dried out. There is still hope.

Agantuk's quality as a film

In this discussion of *Agantuk* I have said nothing about the quality of the film as a film. What about the dramaturgy, that is, about the organization of the actions? The crisp dialogue? The music? There is no doubt much to say about these. But I am so taken up by the film's significance that I find little interest in commenting about its formal qualities beyond what I said about its narrative structure. Of course, the significance of the film cannot be dissociated from its form. One does not stand without the other. *Ganashatru* may have had the five part structure of a drama, yet that film was informed by a musical structure. Only a musical structure can justify the film's ending which may appear somewhat rapid, even abrupt, when seen in terms of a dramatic or novelistic structure. The dance towards the end of the *Agantuk* and the idea of rhythm it conveys suggest that *Agantuk* is informed by a rhythmic impulse rather than a melodic line. The introductory sequence may at first appear literary with Anila reading a letter. But, in fact, around the immaterial object of a piece of news, Anila and her husband display in a series of alternations a wide variety of reactions which reveal their characters. Enters the bison, and a whole set of characters in a series of pas-de-deux and pas-de-trois will define themselves with regard to it—that is, with regard to Mitra. They perform in the main rooms of a 'civilized' house, the drawing, sleeping and dining rooms. What they are forced to reveal is their reaction to the unknown, to life, to the mystery, to others and to self. Dhritiman Chatterjee who had played the counterpart of Dr Gupta (Soumitra Chatterjee) in *Ganashatru* superbly plays the counterpart of Manomohan Mitra (Utpal Dutt).

Since I have related *Agantuk* to Tagore's *Crisis in Civilization*, I may as well relate Ray himself to Tagore. Tagore was eighty at the time of his last lecture, Ray was seventy-one at the time of his last

film. Both spoke in their elected medium with the authority given by prestige, with the experience given by a life dedicated to art and communication. Both spoke from the unique position of persons 'about to leave the world,' when one puts one's whole being in what one is saying and one has no time for what is not essential. If upon listening to Tagore's last lecture, one had remarked that the poet's voice at eighty did not sound as it used to earlier and for that reason his lecture should be taken lightly, as an inferior piece of writing, one would have shown an extraordinary insensitivity bordering on insanity. I have heard a few people claiming that *Agantuk* is not as perfect as were some of the earlier Ray films and, as such, it cannot be taken so seriously. Such a response to *Agantuk* appears to me obtuse, nay, incomprehensible. These same people have told me that a film must be judged by film standards. But, precisely, one of the standards that Ray has established for cinema (and in this he was of one mind with his mentor of earlier years, Jean Renoir) is that it should communicate with the audience. And *Agantuk* does communicate. But one must open one's eyes, and ears. *Agantuk* is a statement—shall I say a testament? Ray did not write it as Tagore did. He has painted it on the white canvas of the cinema, wrestling with time and illness to complete the work. Do you not see that Utpal Dutt gives a human face to the bison of Altamira? That Mitra's character has the impetuous strength of the charging bison? That it has its simple lines, its economy? That it results from a 'drastic simplification of style and content'—which Ray had written in his 1948 manifesto the Indian cinema needed? In *Agantuk* is revealed a 'pattern that connects,' an 'underlying pattern that binds this life together.' The greatest tribute one can pay to Satyajit Ray in front of *Agantuk* is to see the Altamira bison, vibrant on the screen.

Ray's faith in his spectators

Ray, like Renoir, has placed his faith in the spectator of his films. In his second article on cinema, in 1949, Ray quotes Renoir who, speaking about the coming of the sound film, had said:

> It was as if someone had opened a secret door of communication between the filmmaker and his audience. It was a great feeling. Everything we did the audience understood. The French cinema could not have made those enormous strides towards maturity without this wonderfully perceptive audience. They helped us all along the way, and I for one feel grateful to them [10]
>
> GASTON ROBERGE, S.J.

1 From the commentary written and spoken by Satyajit Ray for B.D. Garga's two-reeler film, *Creative Artists of India: Satyajit Ray* (1963). Quoted in *Montage*, no. 5/6, July 1966. See 'Why I make films.'

2 Robinson, Andrew: *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*. London: André Deutsch Ltd., 1989, p. 344.

3 For there is yet another Ray character in screenplay form, made into a film by Mr Sandip Ray.

4 Ray, Satyajit : *Our Films, Their Films*. Calcutta : Orient Longman Ltd., 1976, pp. 33-34.

5 Ibid. p. 22.

6 Ibid. p. 24.

7 Ibid. p. 127. Emphasis mine.

8 Ibid. p. 116.

9 Robinson, *Satyajit Ray : The Inner Eye*, p. 343.

10 Ray, *Our Films, Their Films*, p. 116.

2 Rhetorical flourish of a master

I remember, in one of E M Forster's novels (perhaps *Howard's End*), one character warns another : Beware of the confidence trick. Retort : a want of confidence trick is worse. That exchange has always symbolized to me the opposition of two attitudes to life, indeed, two cultures. To me, *Agantuk* is an exquisite working out of a tension between two cultures.

Ray's last films, *Ganashatru, Shakha–Prashakha* and *Agantuk* form a trilogy. Not in the accepted sense. But in the sense of a noticeable driving moral concern which embraced a secular approach to life, an outraged look at corruption in the widest sense, a contempt for what Henry James called 'the bitch goddess success' and the attendant tricks and insensibilities needed to triumph in the urban jungle.

In a report on a recent Ray seminar in Bombay attended by Benegal and Satish Bahadur a stupid remark was made : 'Seen together, the (later) films suggest he (Ray) moved from a Chekovian to a more judgemental attitude.' (*Independent*, July 21). Call P*ather Panchali* 'Chekovian' (in the vulgar sense this word is used in the report) non-judgemental? As the Americans say, you've gotta be joking! I refer to these issues because a review of *Agantuk* cannot be done in isolation. It has to take into account the criticisms already made of the last three films here and abroad. A lack of visual poetry; an over obvious 'literariness', an equally over-obvious—indeed banal —moralizing.

This is not the place to repeat these charges in detail. Nor is any

purpose served by that. My own view is : here are the last three films by the only Indian cinematic master by world standards. What is important is the body of Ray's work, its tone, its flavour, its unmistakable stamp of a refreshing and masterful individuality. In Ray the style is all; it is there in both *Pather Panchali* and *Agantuk.*

In *Agantuk,* Ray has used the familiar device of the 'stranger,' the outre figure who is a disturber of peace. But also a regenerator, a reviver. It is this combination which is the spine of *Agantuk.*

The structure of the film can be analysed as the relationship of 'uncle' Manmohan with a number of typical urban middle class figures—Anila (Mamata Shankar), the niece; her 'executive' husband, Sudhindra (Dipankar De), their 11-year old son, Satyaki, two representatives of urban culture, an actor (Robi Ghosh), and a fake-detector, Sen Gupta (Dhritiman Chatterjee).

The richest strand in the film is the uncle—niece relationship. It occurs to me that perhaps Manmohan is a creature of the fevered urban imagination—brought into being by its secret frustrations, 'incompleteness,' and self-hatred. Certainly Utpal Dutt plays him in a curiously caricatural, surreal fashon.

Mamata, giving one of her finest performances, is very 'real'—a bundle of sensitivity, half-calculation, half-impulsiveness. The graph of her estimate of the uncle fluctuates wildly—It would take a semiotic critic to draw a chart.

The first sequences evoke the ambience of an upper-middle class, well ordered house—half dead and half alive like this world—that the 'uncle' on a seemingly divine appointed vision is resolved to make fully alive. One of the highlights of the film is Mamata's song which sheds the light of a traditional culture on a squabbling living room and its futile glamour, imposes a 'willing suspension of disbelief.'

With most of the others, the relationship is at an obvious, less successful level. The role of Sudhindra, the busy no–nonsense executive, is very predictable and the sequences between him and the mocking 'uncle' even more so. Ray, usually so good with children, is rather prosy here with the 'uncle' making himself at home with Satyaki's friends.

Ray has always scored in the apparently 'incidental' sequences, those chance 'happenings' far away from the theme of the film. I watched the interplay between the maestros—Utpal Dutt and Robi Ghosh (as theatre actor) with a kind of nostalgic/wistful admiration. How expert was Utpal's dexterous mocking, how vibrant the picture of theatrical satire conjured up by Robi. That sequence is a *coup de theatre* though it occurs in a film.

I am less sure about the Dhritiman Chatterjee—Utpal Dutt encounter/debate. Dhritiman has always been a skilful duellist in confrontations (as in *Ganashatru*). Somehow, here he seems over-loud, too deliberately abrasive. Utpal Dutt is too self-consciously an agonized anthropologist-ecologist, agitated over the folly of development and modernity.

But if this living room encounter is taken in its totality, the sense of Ray's urgent concern with the life we have lost in living comes through. What 'places' this sequence and lifts it is the mystical song by Anila which rounds it off. The 'rationality' of Sen Gupta (Dhritiman) is shown up for what it is—fevered.

One sequence—yet another example of Ray's idiosyncrasy— must be referred to. This is the half-farcical sequence of the senile, deaf lawyer/solicitor whose help is needed to unravel the matter of Anila's grandfather's will—Ray had always had an obsessional fascination, tinged with a kind of black comedy in some films—with ageing and death. It is there in *Pather Panchali* and in a very different fashion in *Shatranj ke khiladi*—the little noticed macabre scene where the two nawabs trip away guiltily, from a friend's death chamber.

The bizarrerie of age is there again in *Shakha–Prashakha* in the portrayal of the senile old man whose horror and significance have been entirely missed by critics. But the sequence in *Agantuk* is wholly light-hearted, even joyous. Was Ray stoically looking at prospects of ageing? Like Picasso, in a very different fashion.

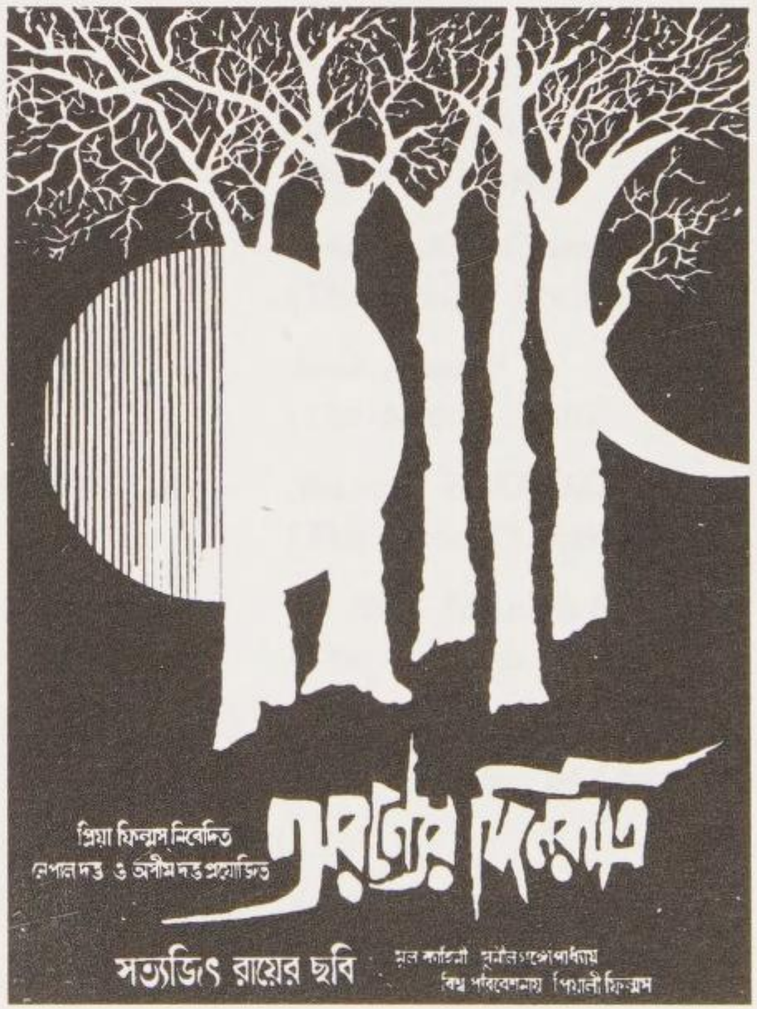
The scenes of reconciliation and harmony with tribal life at the end are unconvincing. Understandably, Ray wanted to get out of the claustrophobia of the living room (there is a similar scene in *Shakha Prashakha*). But the natural ambience of the 'open air'—say, as in *Aranyer Din Ratri*—is missing.

However, the total impact of the film is very different. In Shyam Benegal's film on Ray, a question is raised about the use of zoom on Charulata when she looks at her husband after the classic 'street-watching' scene. It's a 'rhetorical flourish' by Ray.

Reflecting on *Agantuk,* I feel it is a final rhetorical flourish by a master. It says things that Ray desperately wanted to say in the last years of his life. It says them—not lugubriously or pompously—but in the form of a *joie d'esprit* with youthful exuberance which also has the unbearable ambience of a farewell.

IQBAL MASUD
The Telegraph, 24 July 1992

SATYAJIT RAY
filmography



CHRONOLOGY OF FILMS

Feature Films

Date of release	Title	Duration
26.08.1955	*Pather Pānchāli* (Song of the Little Road)	115 min.
11.10.1956	*Aparājito* (The Unvanquished)	113 min.
17.01.1958	*Parash Pāthar* (The Philosopher's Stone)	95 min.
10.10.1958	*Jalsāghar** (The Music Room)	100 min.
01.05.1959	*Apur Sansār** (The World of Apu)	106 min.
19.02.1960	*Devi** (The Goddess)	93 min.
05.05.1961	*Teen Kanyā** (Three Daughters) *(Post Master, Monihārā, Samāpti)*#	171 min.
11.05.1962	*Kānchanjunghā* (Colour)	102 min.
28.09.1962	*Abhijān* (The Expedition)	150 min.
27.09.1963	*Mahānagar* (The Big City)	131 min.
17.04.64	*Chārulatā* (The Lonely Wife)	117 min.
07.05.1965	*Kāpurush-O-Mahāpurush* (The Coward and The Holy Man) (74 min.) (65 min.)	139 min.
06.05.1966	*Nāyak* (The Hero)	120 min.
29.09.1967	*Chiḍiākhānā* (The Menagerie)	137 min.
08.05.1969	*Goopy Gyne Bāghā Byne* (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)	132 min.
16.01.1970	*Aranyer Din-Rātri* (Days and Nights in the Forest)	115 min.
29.10.1970	*Pratidwandi* (The Adversary)	110 min.
24.09.1971	*Seemābaddha* (Company Limited)	112 min.
15.08.1973	*Ashani Sanket* (Colour) (Distant Thunder)	101 min.
27.12.1974	*Sonār Kellā* (Colour) (The Golden Fortress)	115 min.
20.02.1976	*Jana Aranya*[1] (The Middle Man)	131 min.
29.09.1978(Cal.)	*Shatranj ke Khilāḍi* (Colour)[2] (The Chess Players)	113 min.
05.01.1979	*Joi Bābā Felunāth* (Colour)[3] (The Elephant God)	112 min.
19.12.1980	*Hirak Rājār Deshey* (Colour) (The Kingdom of Diamond)	118 min.
13.09.1984 (London) 04.01.1985 (Cal.)	*Gharey-Bāirey* (Colour) (The Home and the World)	140 min.

DATE OF RELEASE	TITLE	DURATION
28.06.1989 (Paris) 29.12.1989 (London) 19.01.1990 (Cal.)	*Ganashatru* (Colour) (An Enemy of the People)	100 min.
05.05.1991 (TV) 21.08.1991 (Paris) 12.06.1993 (Cal.)	*Shākhā-Prashākhā* (Colour)[4] (Branches of a Tree)	120 min.
20.12.1991 (Bombay) 10.07.1992 (Cal.)	*Āgantuk* (Colour) (The Stranger)	119 min.

TV films

YEAR OF PRODUCTION	TITLE	DURATION
1964	*Two* (Colour)	16 min.
1981	*Pikoo* (Colour) (Produced for French TV)	26 min.
1981	*Sadgati* (Colour) (Deliverance)	52 min.

(With *Sadgati* Indian Television inaugurated colour transmission on 25.04. 82.)

Documentaries

YEAR OF PRODUCTION	TITLE	DURATION
1961	*Rabindranath*	54 min.
1971	*Sikkim* (Colour)	52 min. (approx.)
1972	*The Inner Eye* (Colour)	19 min.
1976	*Bala* (Colour)	33 min.
1987	*Sukumar Ray* (Colour)	30 min.

* Produced by Ray himself.

International release : *Two Daughters. Manihārā* dropped. From this film onward Ray began scoring music for his films. 1,2,3 and 4 produced in 1975, 1977, 1978 and 1990 respectively.

Members of Satyajit Ray's Film Unit through the years

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS : Santi Chatterjee, Nityananda Dutta, Subir Hazra, Sailen Dutta, Subrata Lahiri, Ramesh Sen, Tapeswar Prasad, Amiya Sanyal, Sandip Ray, Girish Ranjan, Ramen Chatterjee, Tinu Anand.

ASSISTANT CAMERAMEN : Purnendu Bose, Anil Ghosh, Gnanchand Rikhi, Fatik Mazumder, Durga Raha, Noor Ali Mondal, Dinen Gupta, Soumendu Roy, Nimai Roy, Biren Bhattacharya.

ASSISTANT ART DIRECTORS : Satadal Mitra, Bhola Mali, Asoke Bose.

ASSISTANT EDITORS : Kashinath Bose, K. Mani.

MAKE-UP : Sakti Sen, Ananta Das.

MUSIC RECORDISTS : Satyen Chatterjee, Susanta Banerjee, Shyamsundar Ghosh, Samir Majumdar.

MIXING : Satyen Chatterjee, Shyamsundar Ghosh, Mangesh Desai, Hitendra Ghose.

CONDUCTING/CO-ORDINATION : Aloke Dey.

PRODUCTION CONTROLLER : Anil Chowdhury.

PRODUCTION MANAGER : Bhanu Ghosh.

STILLS : Naren Roy (Teknica), Nemai Ghosh, Hirak Sen.

Pather Pānchāli

SONG OF THE LITTLE ROAD

PRODUCED BY Government of West Bengal. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON NOVEL BY Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (Banerjee). CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Ravi Shankar. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Bhupen Ghosh. Duration : 115 min.

CAST : Kanu Banerjee (*Harihar*), Karuna Banerjee (*Sarbajaya*), Subir Banerjee (*Apu*), Uma Das Gupta (*Durga*), Chunibala Devi (*Indir Thakrun*), Runki Banerjee (*Durga*), Reba Devi (*Sejo Thakrun*), Aparna Devi (*Nilmoni's wife*), Tulsi Chakravarti (*Prasanna, Schoolteacher*), Binoy Mukherjee (*Baidyanath Majumdar*), Haren Banerjee (*Srinibas the Sweet-seller*), Harimohan Nag (*Doctor*), Haridhan Nag (*Chakravarti*), Nibhanoni Devi (*Dasi*), Kshirod Roy (*Priest*), Roma Ganguli (*Roma*).

The film tells the story of a poor Brahmin family who live in their ancestral village in Bengal. The father (a poet and lay priest, an optimist and dreamer whose unrealistic approach to life keeps his family in humiliating poverty). The mother (a practical woman who must cope with the everyday struggles of the family). Durga (their daughter, about six years old when the film begins, whose one bad habit is stealing mangoes from the neighbours' orchard). Apu (their son, an intelligent boy much indulged by mother and sister). An aged aunt (who lives in a hut in the courtyard, constantly bickering with the mother but beloved by Durga).

The secondary characters are a rich, cantankerous woman who owns most of the surrounding orchards and who makes no secret of her disdain for the poor family, and a sympathetic woman, a friend of the mother.

Early in the film Apu is born. Later, the father, sitting in the kitchen, tells his wife of his new job in the Treasury and paints a wonderful future : he will repair the house, find a husband for Durga, send Apu to a good school, and write a great poem or play. The mother is infected by her husband's optimism.

Six years pass. The father is still drudging at his underpaid job; the house is unrepaired. Apu attends a poor school run by a teacher who is also the village grocer. The mother, tired of her husband's complacency, urges him to assert himself.

The children visit the house of the rich, cantankerous woman who later accuses Durga of stealing a valuable necklace. Durga is searched but the necklace is not found. The rich woman accuses the poor family of thieving. The mother vents her humiliation and rage by throwing Durga out of the house, but later sends Apu to bring her home.

That night while the old aunt tells a fairy story to the children the father returns with his overdue wages and tells of an offer to officiate at an initiation ceremony for which he will be well paid. The mother urges him to set out immediately, but he insists that delay is more seemly.

After a bitter quarrel with the mother, the old aunt leaves the house. Meanwhile the children attend a travelling fair and theatrical performance, quarrel and are reconciled. The old aunt returns home ill and begs to be allowed to die there, but the mother does not believe her and refuses to take her in. The old woman leaves. The children find her in the orchard, but their joy is turned to sorrow when they realize she is dead.

The father finally sets out for the initiation ceremony. The mother's anticipations of prosperity are shattered by the arrival of a postcard : the ceremony has been cancelled, her husband is going to the city and will not return until he has earned enough money to repair the house.

Months pass. The lovely daughter of the rich, cantankerous woman is married. Durga is impressed and begins to perform religious rites praying for a happy marriage. The mother fights a losing battle against poverty.

A second postcard from her husband brings good news — he has earned the necessary money and is returning home.

The homecoming is saddened by Durga's death. The father at last faces life realistically and decides to take his family to Benaras.

The family leave their ancestral home for a new life.

Aparājito

THE UNVANQUISHED

PRODUCED BY Government of West Bengal. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A NOVEL BY Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (Banerjee). CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Ravi Shankar. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 113 min.

CAST : Kanu Banerjee (*Harihar*), Karuna Banerjee (*Sarbajaya*), Pinaki Sen Gupta (*Apu as a little boy*), Smaran Ghoshal (*adolescent Apu*), Santi Gupta (*Lahiri's wife*), Ramani Sen Gupta (*Bhabataran*), Ranibala (*Teli*), Sudipta Roy (*Nirupama*), Ajay Mitra (*Anil*), Charuprakash Ghosh (*Nanda-Babu*), Subodh Ganguli (*Headmaster*), Moni Srimani (*School Inspector*), Hemanta Chatterjee (*Professor*), Kali Banerjee (*Kathak*), Lalchand Banerjee (*Lahiri*), K. S. Pandey (*Pandey*), Meenakshi Devi (*Pandey's wife*), Anil Mukherjee (*Abinash*), Harendra Kumar Chakravarti (*Doctor*), Bhaganu Palwan (*Palwan*).

Benaras in the year 1920.

In the ground floor of a small three-storeyed house in one of the city's countless alleys lives Harihar Roy with his wife Sarbajaya and his ten year old son Apu. Harihar is a refugee from Bengal, a priest by profession and a dabbler in herbal medicine. The first floor of the house is occupied by the Pandeys, husband, wife and four children, while on the top floor lives Nanda-Babu, a bachelor and businessman.

While Sarbajaya keeps house, Harihar reads out from the scriptures to an audience consisting mainly of old widows, whose subscription provides him with his main source of income.

Apu plays with the boys of the street, explores the ghats.

One evening, while Sarbajaya counts the day's collection, a letter arrives from Bhabataran Chatterjee, an aged uncle of Sarbajaya's. Bhabataran, himself a priest, has suggested that they should come back to Bengal and live in his house in the village of Mansapota where Harihar could take over his priestly duties while he (Bhabataran) could spend the last years of his life in Benaras.

Although times are not easy for them, Sarbajaya, a woman of strong will, does not hesitate to decline because she feels that the offer smacks of charity.

The festive season arrives. On the night of Diwali, Harihar comes home with fever. The doctor's as well as Harihar's own efforts prove to be of no avail and on the fourth day of his illness Harihar dies.

The widowed Sarbajaya takes on the job of a cook in a zamindar's house.

While Sarbajaya toils in the kitchen, Apu, without his mother's knowledge, runs errands for the zamindar himself and earns small tips which he promptly spends in buying peanuts to feed the monkeys in the nearby temple of Durga.

One day, Sarbajaya is surprised by a visit from her uncle Bhabataran who has come to Benaras upon learning of their bereavement and to tell her that his offer still stands. Sarbajaya hesitates, but her chance discovery of Apu's activities helps her to make up her mind.

In the village of Mansapota, Bhabataran teaches Apu the rudiments of priesthood and leaves for Benaras. But Apu is unhappy for lack of company. The boys all go to school!

One night Apu asks his mother to send him to school. To Apu's surprise and delight. Sarbajaya agrees. Apu shines at school, and encouraged by his kindly Headmaster, takes to the study of science.

At the age of sixteen Apu passes his Matriculation Examination with distinction and obtains a scholarship of ten rupees a month.

A helpless Sarbajaya watches her son leave for the city in the pursuit of higher studies.

Bewildered at first by the vastness of the city of Calcutta, Apu gets used to its ways soon enough, so much so that the one month he spends in the village on a vacation seems dull to him. Sarbajaya, sensing the change that is taking place in her son's outlook, has not the heart to tell him of her illness.

After the vacation, Apu prepares for his first terminal examination while Sarbajaya quietly awaits her end.

A postcard informs Apu of the seriousness of her condition.

Apu loses no time in coming to Mansapota, but he arrives a day too late. Old Bhabataran has also come. He advises a dazed Apu to give up his studies and resume his profession of a priest.

It takes Apu some time to realize that the death of his mother has removed the only obstacle from the path of his ambition.

Parash Pāthar

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

PRODUCED BY Pramod Lahiri. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Parashuram (Rajshekhar Bose). CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Ravi Shankar. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 95 min.

CAST : Tulsi Chakravarti (*Paresh Chandra Dutta*), Ranibala (*His wife*), Kali Banerjee (*Priyatosh Henry Biswas*), Gangapada Bose (*Kachalu*), Haridhan Mukherjee (*Inspector Chatterjee*), Jahar Roy (*Bhajahari*), Bireswar Sen (*Police officer*), Moni Srimani (*Dr. Nandi*), Chhabi Biswas, Jahar Ganguli, Pahari Sanyal, Kamal Mitra, Nitish Mukherjee, Subodh Ganguli, Tulsi Lahiri, Amar Mullick (*Male guests at cocktail party*), Chandrabati Devi, Renuka Roy, Bharati Devi (*Female guests at cocktail party*).

Returning home from work one evening, Paresh Dutta, a middle-aged bank clerk, picks up a stone which turns out to have alchemic properties.

After a long battle with his conscience, Paresh decides to use the stone to provide himself with comforts that had so far been denied him.

A lapse of four years finds Paresh a respected and respectable public figure performing such functions as befit such men. We learn that he has not revealed his source of wealth to anybody, not even his secretary Priyatosh Henry Biswas, an amiable young man given to long amorous telephone conversations with his sweetheart Hindola Mazumdar.

Attending a cocktail party at a rich businesman Kachalu's place, Paresh has his first taste of liquor, and in no time finds himself demonstrating the powers of his precious stone to the guests. He is taken to be a professional magician by all except Kachalu, who tries to extract his 'formula' out of him, is foozled, and ends up by informing the police.

Sensing danger, Paresh bequeaths the stone and his properties to his secretary and flees in his car. But the police catch up with him.

As Paresh is held on a charge of smuggling gold, and the city is rocked by the front page news of Paresh's activity, Priyatosh has a serious misunderstanding with Hindola and swallows the stone sorely needed by Paresh to disprove the charge in an attempt to commit suicide.

It would seem as if only a miracle could exonerate Paresh and clear the air for a happy ending.

Indeed, it is a miracle which does it.

Jalsāghar

THE MUSIC ROOM

PRODUCED BY Satyajit Ray. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Vilayat Khan. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 100 min.

CAST : Chhabi Biswas (*Bishwambhar Roy*), Padma Devi (*Mahamaya, his wife*), Pinaki Sen Gupta (*Bireshwar, his son*), Gangapada Bose (*Mahim Ganguli*), Tulsi Lahiri (*Taraprasanna, the Naib or Manager*), Kali Sarkar (*Ananta, Cook*), Wahed Khan (*Ustad Ujir Khan*), Roshan Kumari (*Krishna Bai*).

Zamindar Bishwambhar Roy belonged to a feudal family hoary with tradition. His predecessors for the first three generations had accumulated wealth. The fourth generation consolidated the prosperity. But the fifth and sixth generations lived a life of pleasure and left behind a huge liability. All that was left was engulfed in an ocean of debt during the period of Bishwambhar.

Proud of his heritage Bishwambhar was not one to yield to circumstances. With due pomp and glory he celebrated the sacred thread ceremony of his only son Bireshwar by pledging a few family jewels and ornaments. The palace of the Roys resounded with music and songs and a brilliant display of fireworks.

A few days after the celebrations, Mahamaya, wife of Bishwambhar, left for her father's place with her son. She entreated Bishwambhar to be more careful with his expenses and not to squander away unnecessarily. The rich moneylender and businessman Janardan Ganguli's son Mahim Ganguly had just completed his modishly designed house in the neighbourhood. During the absence of Mahamaya he came to invite Bishwambhar to his house-warming ceremony. Bishwambhar could not put up with the showing-off by an upstart. He curtly refused on the plea that on the same day he had the celebration of 'Homage-Day' — the day when the subjects called on the Zamindar with offerings to pay him their respect at his palace.

Mahim left in disgrace. In spite of his promise to Mahamaya, Bishwambhar pledged the remaining jewels and ornaments of the family through his Naib Taraprasanna. He ordered a grand celebration to mark the occasion and sent word for Mahamaya and his son. On the day of the celebrations a big storm came up. In the evening while the Ustad Ujir Khan sang the Mian-ki-Malhar news came that the pleasure boat bringing back Mahamaya and Bireshwar was caught in a storm and it had not been possible to rescue them. The tragic news stunned Bishwambhar.

Four years after the event Bishwambhar was left with only a piece of land which was his as a *sebait* on verdict from the Privy Council. Of his retinue he had only his naib Taraprasanna and cook Ananta. Bishwambhar had settled on a bland existence, shunning all pleasures. Meanwhile Mahim Ganguly had built a music room in his palace and he came to invite Bishwambhar to grace its inauguration by his presence. His words were tinged with irony. This time also Bishwambhar refused the invitation on grounds of indisposition. Once a connoisseur of music, Bishwambhar could not help feeling restless as the music of the Kathak dance of Krishnabai dancing in Mahim's house reached him. In a last demonstration of power and prosperity Bishwambhar decided to present a private concert with Krishnabai dancing in his music room which had remained closed from the date his wife and his only son died.

The concert claims the last farthing of the estate. Bishwambhar's last dramatic gesture, before he has his horse Toofan brought out and rides to his death, is to stop his guest, the newly rich Mohim, from offering a bag of coins to the dancer in appreciation of her skill, and offering his own last gold coins as a present to her, asserting for the final time the rights of the host.

Apur Sansār

THE WORLD OF APU

PRODUCED BY Satyajit Ray Productions. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A PART OF *Aparājito,* A NOVEL BY Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Ravi Shankar. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 106 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Apu*), Sharmila Tagore (*Aparna*), Alok Chakravarti (*Kajal*), Swapan Mukherjee (*Pulu*), Dhiresh Majumdar (*Shashinarayan*), Sefalika Devi (*Shashinarayan's wife*), Dhiren Ghosh (*Landlord*), Tushar Banerjee (*Groom*).

In a small room on the top floor of a house in north Calcutta lives Apu, an orphan youth who has passed his intermediate examination and now spends the better part of the day in a fruitless search for a job. His only relaxation is his flute and if he has often to go without a proper meal, he finds intellectual nourishment in working on his magnum opus — an autobiographical novel which he believes will bring his name to the fore as a writer and build his future.

Invited by his friend Pulu to attend the wedding of his cousin Aparna, Apu goes to an old world village, a hundred miles away from Calcutta.

The wedding — an arranged one — is almost thwarted by the astonishing revelation that the groom is given to fits of insanity. Faced with the necessity of finding another groom within the hour appointed for the ceremony, Pulu, in company with some elders, approaches Apu and implores him to save the family's name by consenting to marry. At first Apu violently dissents, but later finds himself moved, out of pity, to a sort of half-hearted consent.

The wedding takes place. Apu brings his wife to Calcutta and takes on a clerical job. Although brought up in affluence, Aparna quickly adapts herself to the circumstances of privation, and the two spend an idyllic year together.

It is with a heavy heart that Apu bids good-bye to his wife as she goes away to spend her period of confinement with her parents. A month later the news arrives of her death in childbirth.

Struck dumb by the tragedy, Apu even forgets to enquire about the child, who has survived. Soon after this, he relinquishes his job, his home, and his writing, and goes off wandering in a vague search for peace.

Five years pass. Pulu returns from England to find Apu's son Kajal growing up neglected and uncared for in the village. Pulu hunts Apu down in a small colliery town somewhere in Central India and persuades him to return to his son and assume the responsibilities of fatherhood. Apu goes, more as a gesture of convention than out of anxiety for his son. But the sight of the boy fills him with a deep love.

It is this new love that gives his life a new meaning and his heart the courage to come out of his recluse and face a future no less uncertain than before.

Devi

THE GODDESS

PRODUCED BY Satyajit Ray Productions. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Ali Akbar Khan. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 93 min.

CAST : Chhabi Biswas (*Kalikinkar Roy*), Soumitra Chatterjee (*Umaprasad, younger son*), Sharmila Tagore (*Dayamoyee*), Purnendu Mukherjee (*Taraprasad, elder son*), Karuna Banerjee (*Harasundari, his wife*), Arpan Chowdhury (*Khoka, child*), Anil Chatterjee (*Bhudeb*), Kali Sarkar (*Professor Sarkar*), Mohammed Israil (*Nibaran*), Khagesh Chakravarti (*Kaviraj*), Nagendranath Kayabyakarantirtha (*Priest*), Santa Devi (*Sarala*).

Kalikinkar Roy, Zamindar of Chandipur, is a man of deep religious convictions and a great devotee of the goddess Kali. He has two sons. The elder, Tarapada, is weak-willed, and anxious not to displease his father lest he be deprived of his inheritance. He has a wife, Harasundari, and a five-year old son Khoka.

The younger son Umaprasad, whose newly wedded wife Daya is a great favourite of her father-in-law's, has little in common with his elder brother. He studies in a college in Calcutta, and looks upon his father's religious ostentation as being narrow-minded and old-fashioned. He hopes to get a job in the city and settle with his wife there, in a more enlightened atmosphere. Daya likes the idea but worries about being away from Khoka. The child is devoted to her to a degree that arouses the jealousy of his mother.

One night Kalikinkar has a dream which leads him to believe that Daya is an incarnation of the goddess Kali. He proclaims the vision, and the helpless Daya finds herself installed as a deity. Umaprasad, away in Calcutta, is summoned by Harasundari, and arrives to witness the extraordinary spectacle of a sick peasant child being laid at the feet of Daya in the hope of a miraculous recovery.

Umaprasad seeks out his father, has a serious quarrel with him, and threatens to stop the meaningless ritual. But he is unnerved by the news of the sick child having apparently survived through the mercy of the 'saint' Daya.

Umaprasad, however, decides to run away with his wife. The two set out at midnight, but Daya is suddenly seized with a fear of retribution. 'What if I am a saint?' she asks. 'That child survived.' Giving up in despair, Umaprasad has to go back to the city, leaving Daya to resume her life of a goddess. Her fame spreads and the number of devotees increases. But Daya has no peace of mind, and keeps pining for her husband, and her simple human existence.

At this point, Khoka falls seriously ill. Harasundari, who had never believed in Daya's divinity, would have the child treated by a doctor. But on her husband's insistence the child is brought to Daya and dies in her lap.

Prevailed upon by his college professor, Umaprasad returns to Chandipur with the firm determination to free his wife from her bondage. But he discovers that he is too late. The shock of Khoka's death has been too much for Daya and she has lost her mind. At Umaprasad's appearance, she runs out of the house pursued by her husband, who reaches her only when she is dying. She dies only after she has tried to say something to Umaprasad—and with a smile.

Teen Kanyā

THREE DAUGHTERS

PRODUCED BY Satyajit Ray Productions. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON STORIES BY Rabindranath Tagore. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra.

Postmaster

CAST : Anil Chatterjee (*Nándalal*), Chandana Banerjee (*Ratan*), Nripati Chatterjee (*Bisay*), Khagen Pathak (*Khagen*), Gopal Roy (*Bilash*).

Duration : 56 min.

Nandalal, a young man from the city, takes on the job of a postmaster in a remote village. He inherits Ratan, an orphan, as his teenage housekeeper from the previous postmaster, an irritable old man who had not treated her well. The little sympathy that Nanda shows the girl brings out all the love and tenderness that she is capable of.

Unused to the loneliness of village life, unnerved by a severe attack of malaria, Nanda is finally obliged to give up the job. It is only at the moment of departure that he realizes the depth of feeling that bound him to the little helpless girl.

Samāpti

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Amulya*), Aparna Dasgupta (*Mrinmoyee*), Sita Mukherji (*Jogamaya*), Gita Dey (*Nistarini*), Santosh Dutta, Mihir Chakraborty (*Rakhal*), Debi Neogi (*Haripada*).

Duration : 56 min.

Young Amulya, just out of college, rejects the girl of her mother's choice, and decides to marry tomboy Mrinmoyee, with whom he has fallen in love at first sight. Alone with Amulya on the night of the wedding, the bride reveals that she had been forced into the marriage which she resents because of the loss of freedom it implies. Later in the night, she runs away from the bridal chamber. She is brought back a prisoner the following morning and receives the treatment that is normally meted out to such unconventional brides. A disillusioned Amulya sends his bride home and goes away to Calcutta. In his absence Mrinmoyee undergoes a profound mental change, and when at last she does go back to her husband, it is of her own free will, and because she has realized that she loves him and needs him.

Manihārā

CAST : Kali Banerjee (*Phanibhusan Saha*), Kanika Majumdar (*Manimalika*), Kumar Roy (*Madhusudan*), Gobinda Chakraborty (*Schoolmaster and narrator*).

Duration : 59 min.

Phanibhusan Saha comes to the village of Manikpur to the property that he has inherited upon the death of his wealthy uncle. He hopes that the new surroundings will do his wife good, for she had been inclined to brood over her inability to bear children. But Manimalika begins to develop new and alarming tendencies, one of them being an inordinate fascination for jewellery.

A fire in Phanibhusan's jute godown precipitates a crisis, and a suspicion forms in Manimalika's mind that her jewels would be needed to pay off business debts. Phanibhusan goes to Calcutta to arrange for money. In his absence, Manimalika runs away with her jewels and dies in a boatwreck.

Phanibhusan returns with a new necklace for his wife, and finds that there is no one to give it to . . . Or is there? In Manimalika's case, the lure for jewels persists even after death, and she returns from her watery grave to claim her necklace.

Kānchanjunghā

PRODUCED BY N.C.A. Productions. ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 102 min.

CAST : Chhabi Biswas (*Indranath Chaudhury*), Anil Chatterjee (*Anil*), Karuna Banerjee (*Labanya*), Anubha Gupta (*Anima*), Subrata Sen (*Shankar*), Indrani Singh (*Tuklu*), Alaknanda Roy (*Manisha*), Arun Mukherjee (*Ashoke*), N. Viswanathan (*Mr. Banerjee*), Pahari Sanyal (*Jagadish*), Vidya Sinha (*Lily*).

Indranath Chaudhuri, holder of a British title and chairman of five big companies in Calcutta, has come to Darjeeling with his family for a holiday. The events in the film involve the members of this family, and take place on the last afternoon of their stay.

Labanya, Indranath's wife, a sensitive woman, is resigned to submitting to her husband's will. Brother-in-law Jagadish is a widower and a bird-fancier. Then there is Anima the eldest daughter, her husband Shankar and their six-year old daughter Tuklu; son Anil who goes about flirting with girls of the local smart set; and the quiet, sensitive younger daughter Monisha, who is studying for her B.A. in Calcutta. Among others involved in the story is Pranab Banerjee, brillant young engineeer just returned from England. Banerjee has fallen in love with Monisha, and is at the point of proposing to her. Indranath strongly approves of the match, which makes it all the more difficult for Monisha who finds she cannot fall in love with the young gentleman.

Much lower in the social scale is the schoolmaster Sibsankar Roy, once private tutor of Indranath's son, Anil. Sibsankar spots Indranath in the Mall and promptly drags his nephew Ashoke to him and introduces him in the hope that the big man would use his influence to find the boy a job in Calcutta.

In the course of the afternoon, a series of developments take place in the relationship between these characters.

The elder daughter Anima learns that the husband had long been aware of her supposedly secret affair with another man. The two quarrel bitterly, and it is only the thought of their daughter Tuklu that finally brings them together in an uneasy compromise.

Son Anil loses one girl friend and promptly finds another.

Ashoke finds himself alone in the company of Indranath, is anxious to impress him but gradually discovers the hollow heart and the unpatriotic feelings that the facade of the man conceals. This leads Ashoke to a reckless but triumphant refusal of Indranath's offer of a job.

Monisha breaks away from Banerjee, and finds herself striking up a brief but warm friendship with Ashoke — the boy who has an instinctive contempt for girls of her 'class'.

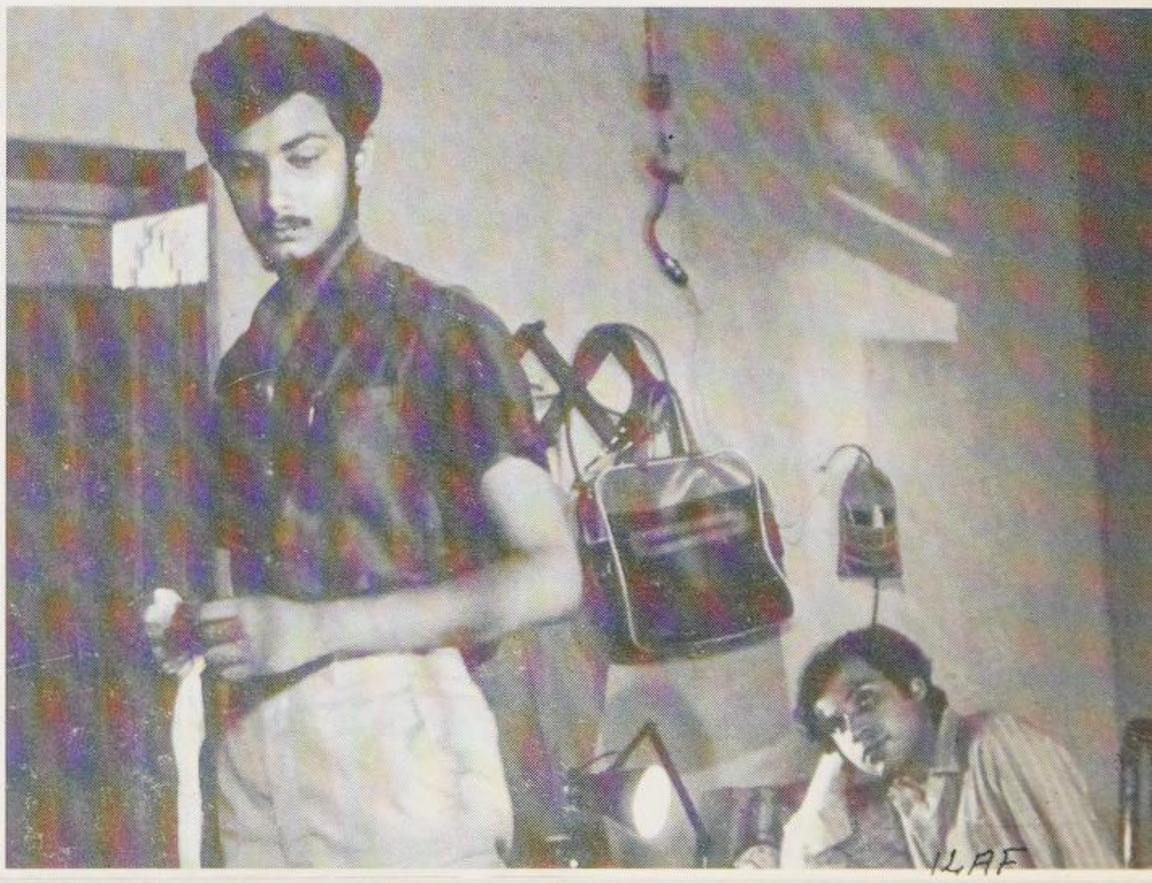
The end of the film finds Indranath an utterly confused man who can sense the end of his domination but cannot yet quite make out the circumstances that led to it in a single afternoon.

TOP LEFT. Byomkesh Bakshi (Uttam Kumar), the sleuth, with his assistant, Ajit (Shailen Mukherjee). TOP RIGHT. The two in disguise.

Chiriakhana

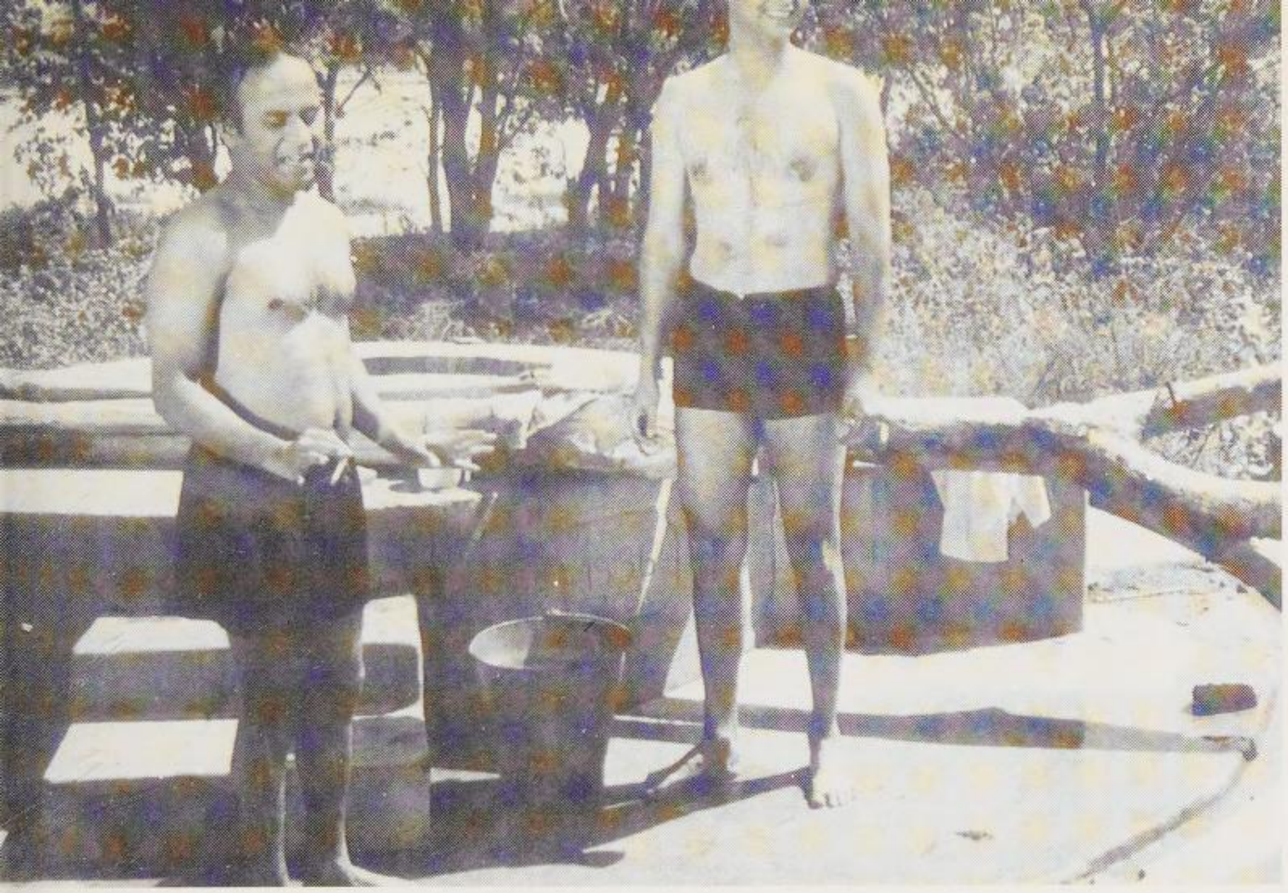
BOTTOM LEFT. Siddhartha (Dhritiman Chatterjee) and Keya (Jayasree Roy) — The Adversary finds love. BOTTOM RIGHT. The brothers — Tunu, the Naxalite (Debraj Roy), and Siddhartha, seeking a respectable job.

Pratidwandi



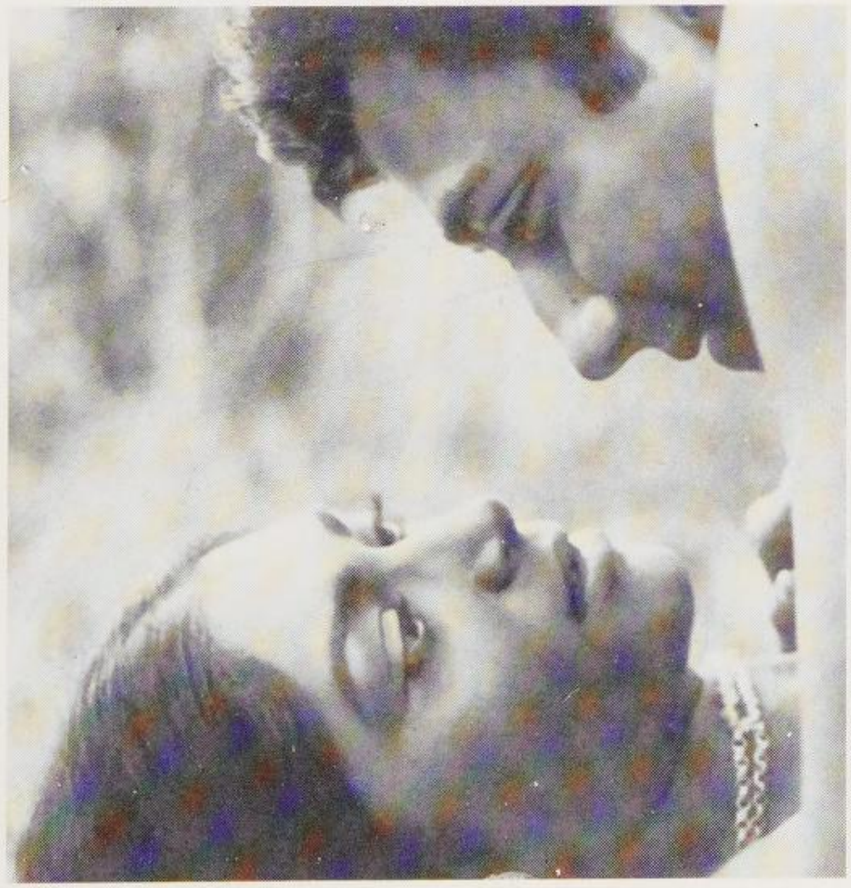
Top Left. Bagha the drummer (Robi Ghosh) and Goopy the singer (Tapen Chatterjee) — mediocrities transformed into masters by the King of the Ghosts. Still shot by Nemai Ghosh.
Top Right. King of Shundi (Santosh Dutta) exposes his plan to Goopy and Bagha. Bottom. Bagha and Goopy performing for the King of Shundi.

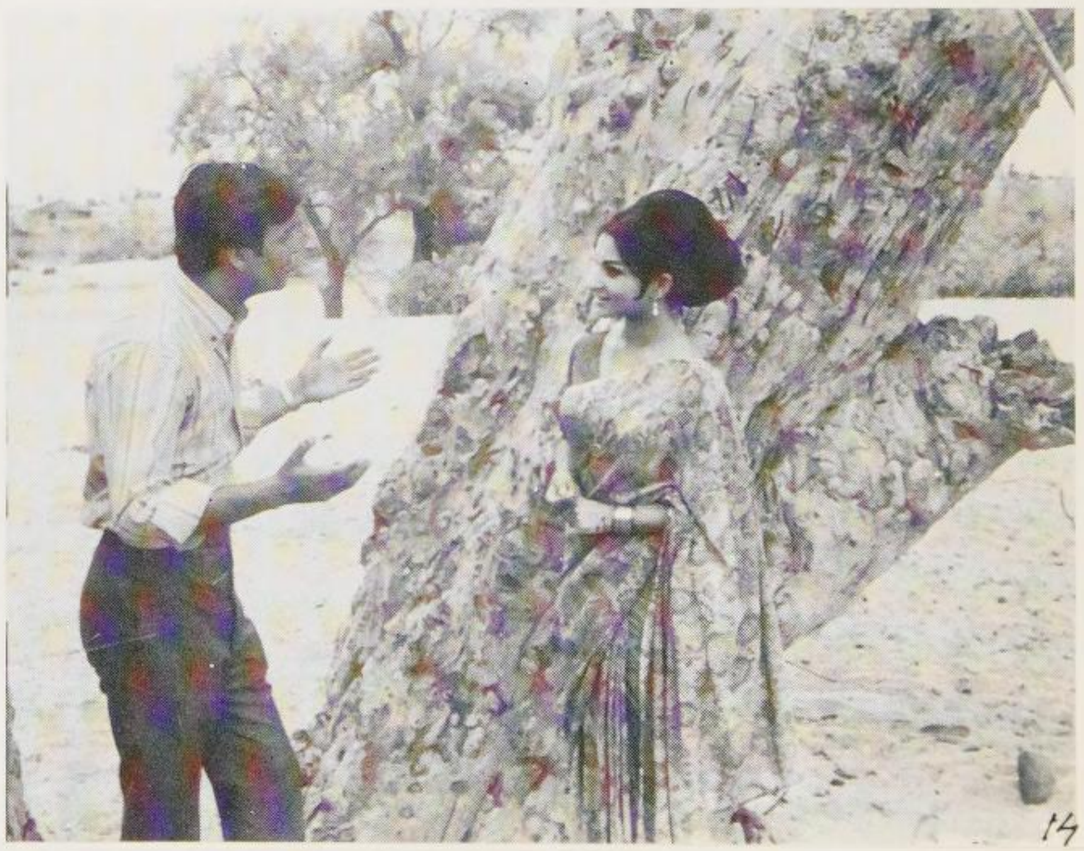
Goopy Gyne
Bagha Byne

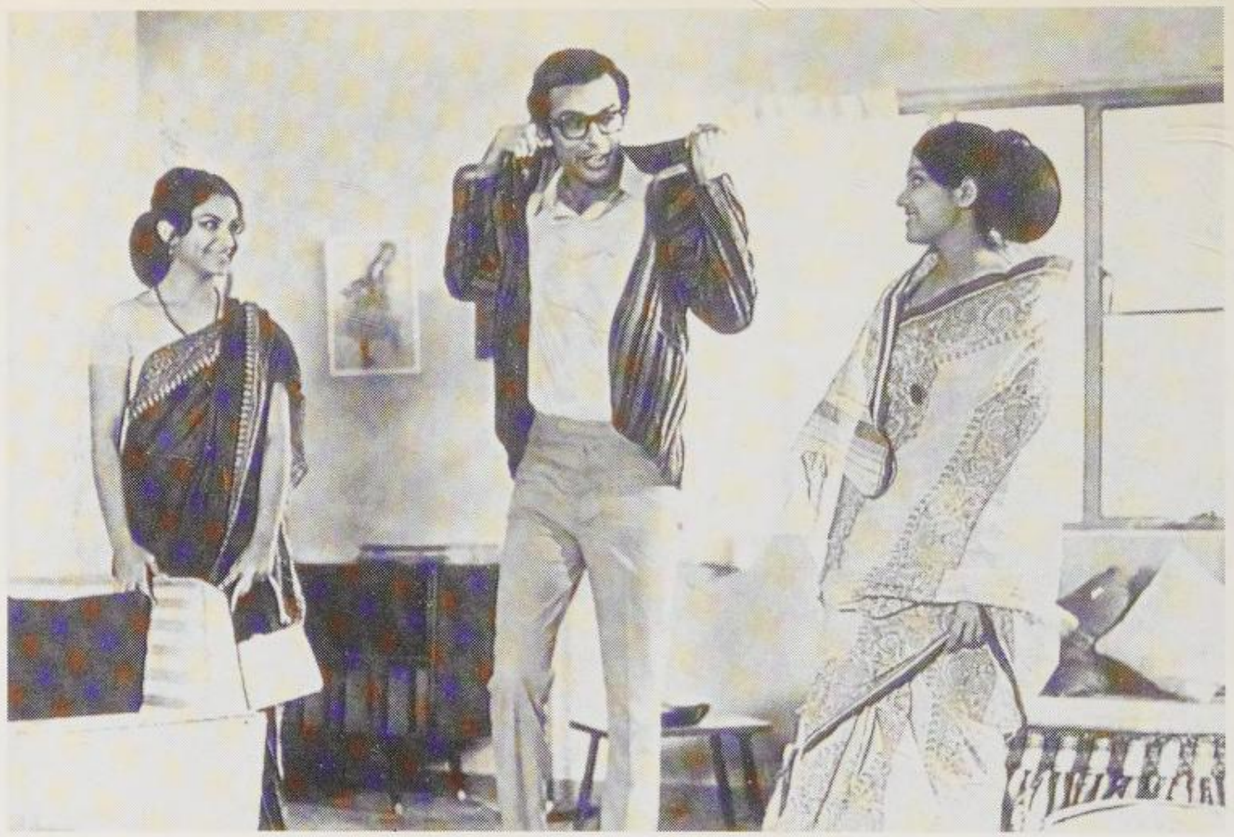


Top Left. Time for a bath — Shekhar (Robi Ghosh) and Ashim (Soumitra Chatterjee). Top Right. Shekhar and Harinath (Samit Bhanja). Bottom Left. Chance lovers — Duli (Simi) and Harinath. Bottom Right. An imperfect romance — Ashim and Aparna (Sharmila Tagore) — still shot by Nemai Ghosh.

Aranyer Dinratri

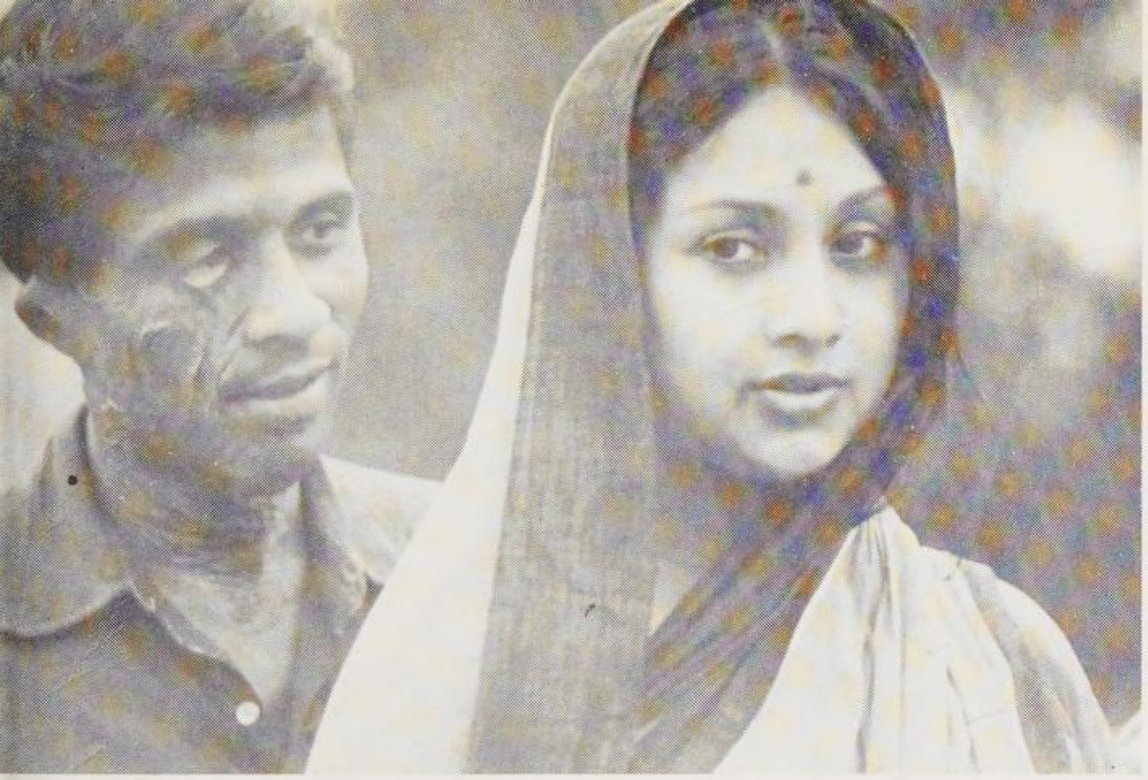


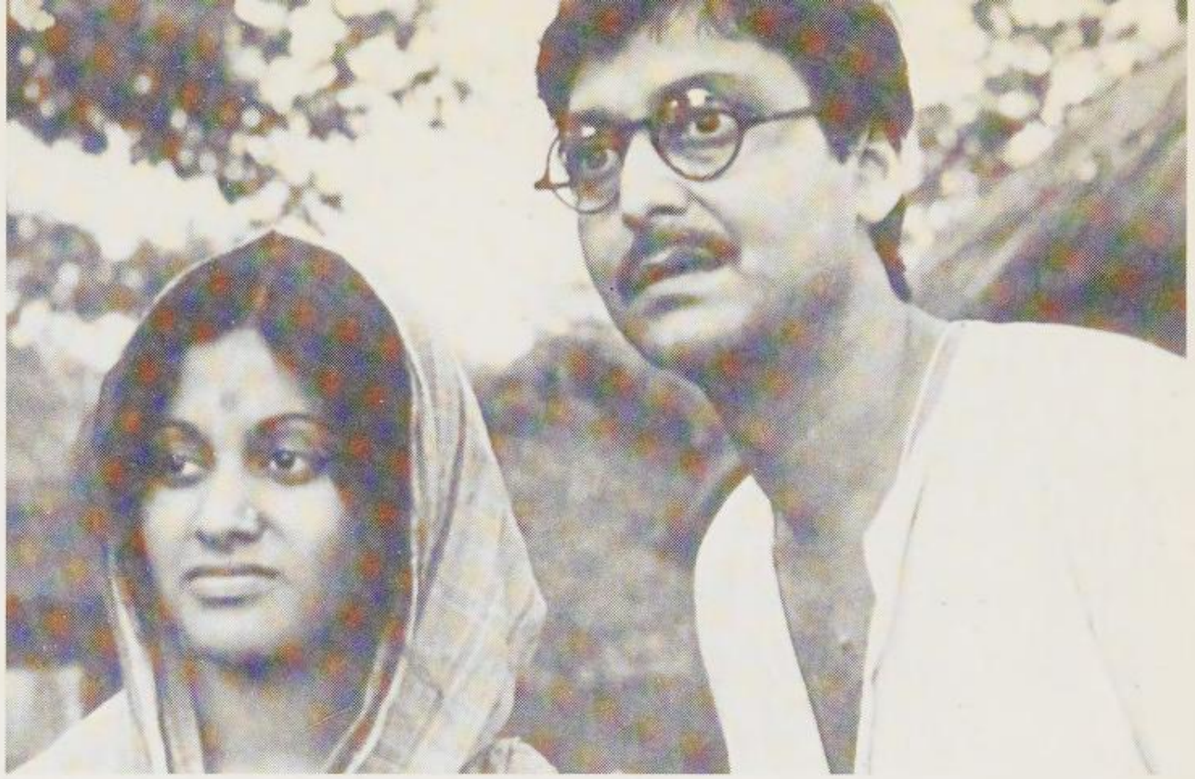




Seemabaddha

TOP LEFT. Wife (Paramita Chowdhury) of Shyamalendu, the Company Executive. TOP RIGHT. Tutul (Sharmila Tagore), who arrives to plant doubts in the Executive's (Barun Chanda) mad journey to success, and the unquestioning wife. BOTTOM. The trio once again : Shyamalendu, Tutul, and the wife. The Top Right and Bottom stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

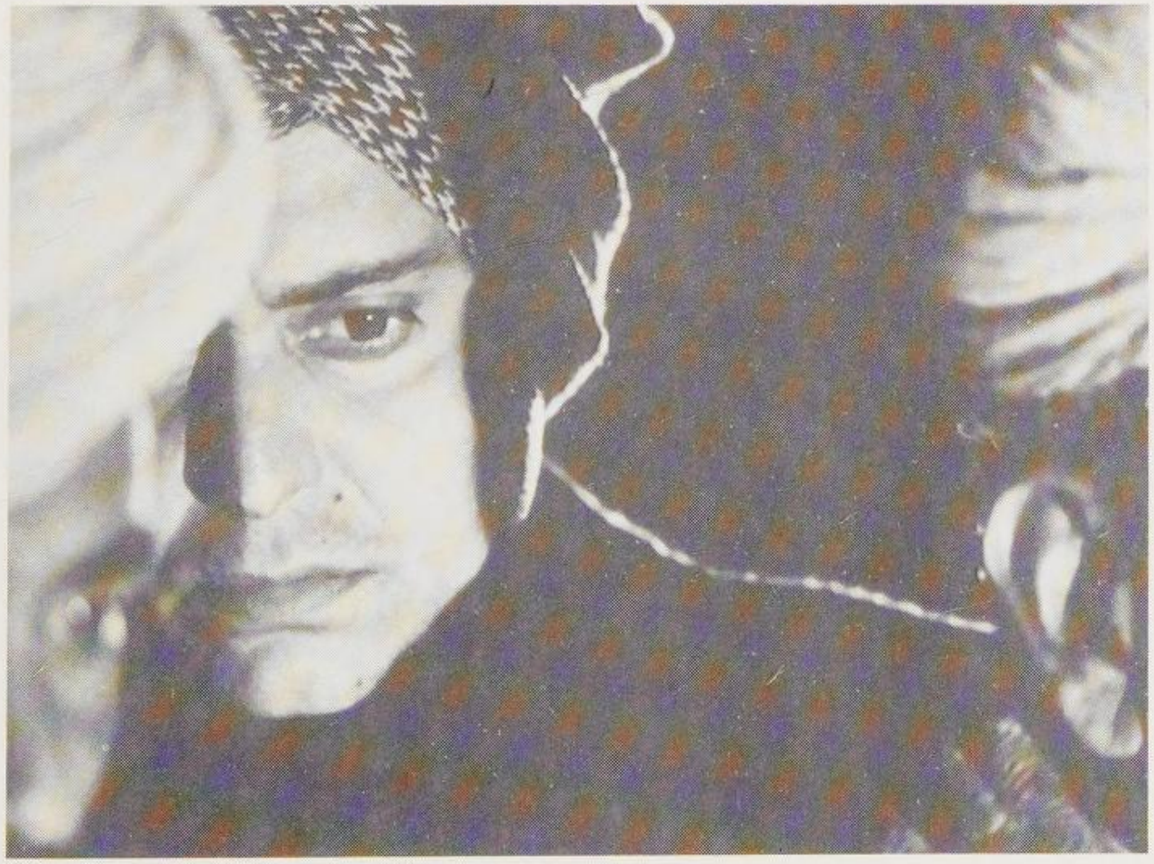




Ashani Sanket

LEFT. Jadu (Nani Ganguly), a threat to the old world values of the traditional village, and Chhutki (Sandhya Roy).
RIGHT. Ananga (Babita), who upholds charity and kindness, and her teacher husband, Gangacharan (Soumitra Chatterjee), facing the famine.
Both stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

Sonar Kella

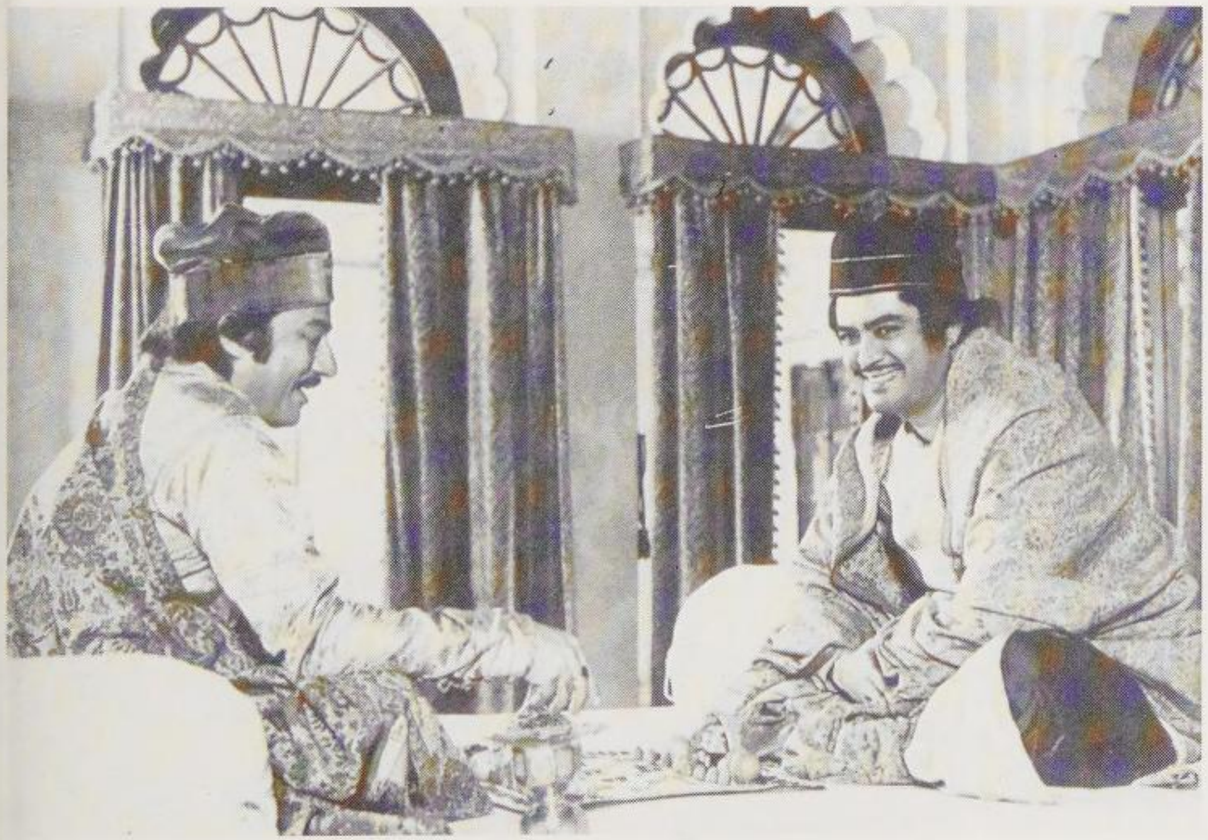


LEFT. Felu-da (Soumitra Chatterjee), Ray's favourite sleuth. RIGHT. Left to right : Jatayu (Santosh Dutta), the detective fiction writer member of Felu-da's crew, Felu-da himself, Amiyanath Barman (Ajoy Banerjee), Mandar Bose (Kamu Mukherjee). Still on Left shot by Sandip Ray, the one on Right by Nemai Ghosh.

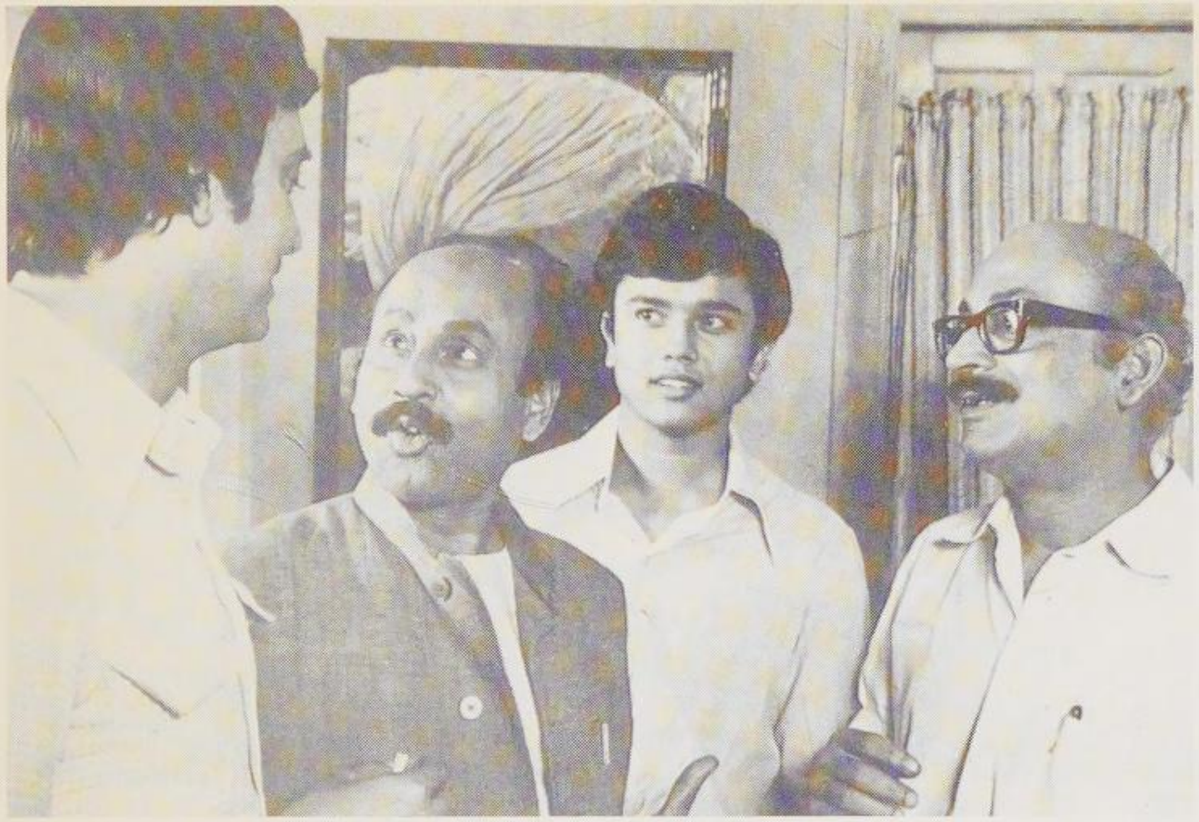
Jana Aranya

ABOVE. Somnath (Pradip Mukherjee), with sister-in-law Kamala (Lily Chakrabarty), in a typical middle class home situation. TOP RIGHT. The world outside, with Adak (Bimal Chatterjee), Mr Mitter (Robi Ghosh), and Somnath. BOTTOM RIGHT. The family together, with Somnath, his father (Satya Banerjee), Kamala, and Bhombol (Dipankar Dey). All the stills shot by Sandip Ray.

Shatranj Ke Khiladi



Decadence and the Rise of Colonial Rule, documented in:
Top Left. A dance performance in Wajid Ali Shah's Court in Avadh. Still by Sandip Ray.
Top Right. Khurshid (Shabana Azmi). Still by Nemai Ghosh.
Bottom Left. Sajjad Ali (Sanjeev Kumar) and Roshan Ali (Saeed Jaffrey), merrily playing away, as Avadh goes under. Still by Nemai Ghosh.
Bottom Right. Wajid Ali Shah (Amjad Khan) meets the representative of the new rulers in General Outram (Sir Richard Attenborough). Still by Sandip Ray.



Joy Baba Felunath

LEFT. Felu-da, with Jatayu, Topshe (Siddhartha Chatterjee), and Nibaran Chakrabarty (Satya Banerjee).
RIGHT. Grandfather Ambika Ghoshal (Bimal Chatterjee) and grandson Ruku (Jit Bose). Both stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

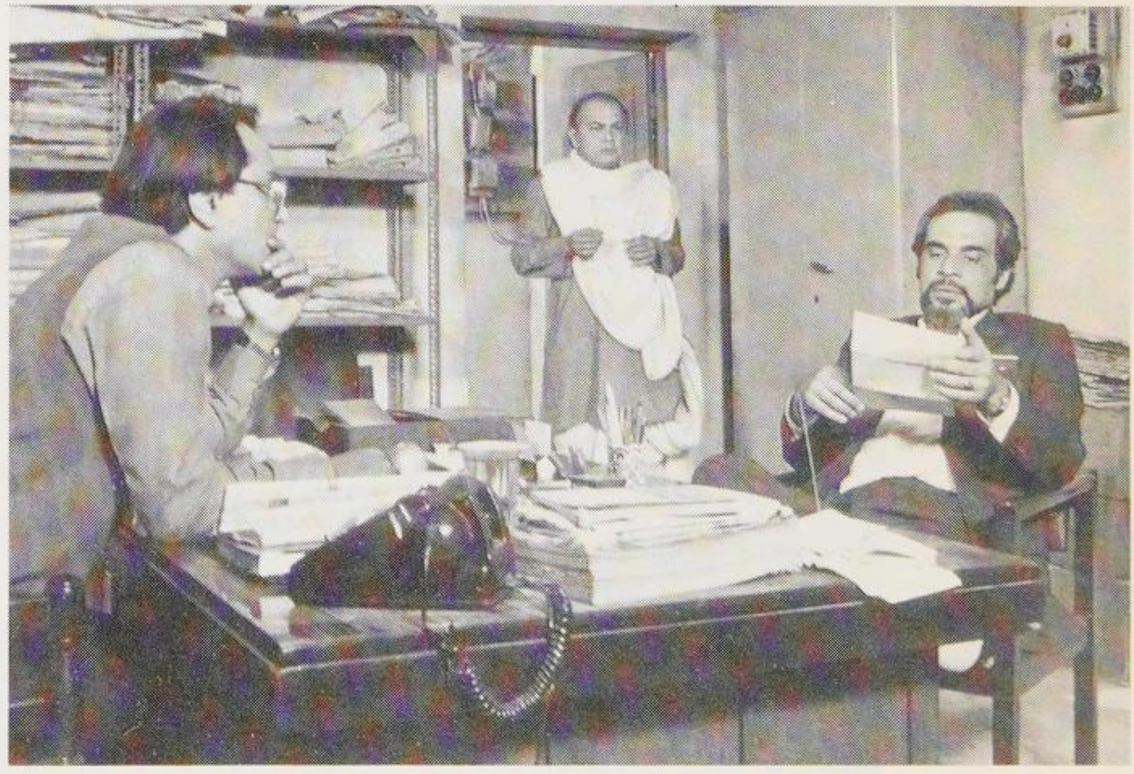
Hirak Rajar Deshey

LEFT. The Gabeshak (Santosh Dutta).
RIGHT. The King of the Land of Diamonds (Utpal Dutt) and his Court Jester (Ajoy Banerjee). Both stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

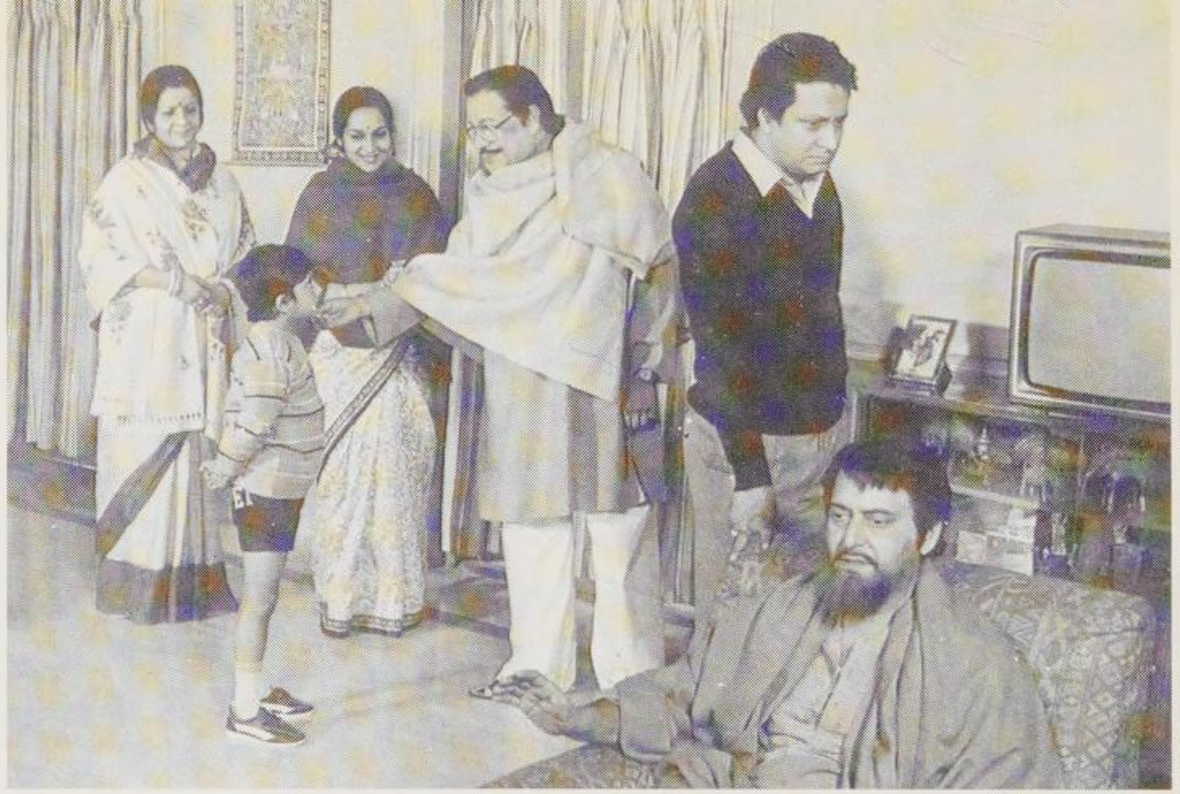
Ghare Bairey

LEFT. Sandip (Soumitra Chatterjee), Bimala (Swatilekha Sengupta), and Nikhilesh (Victor Banerjee), in the politics of man-woman relationships and the liberation movement. RIGHT. The Headmaster (Manoj Mitra), with Nikhilesh. Both stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

Ganashatru

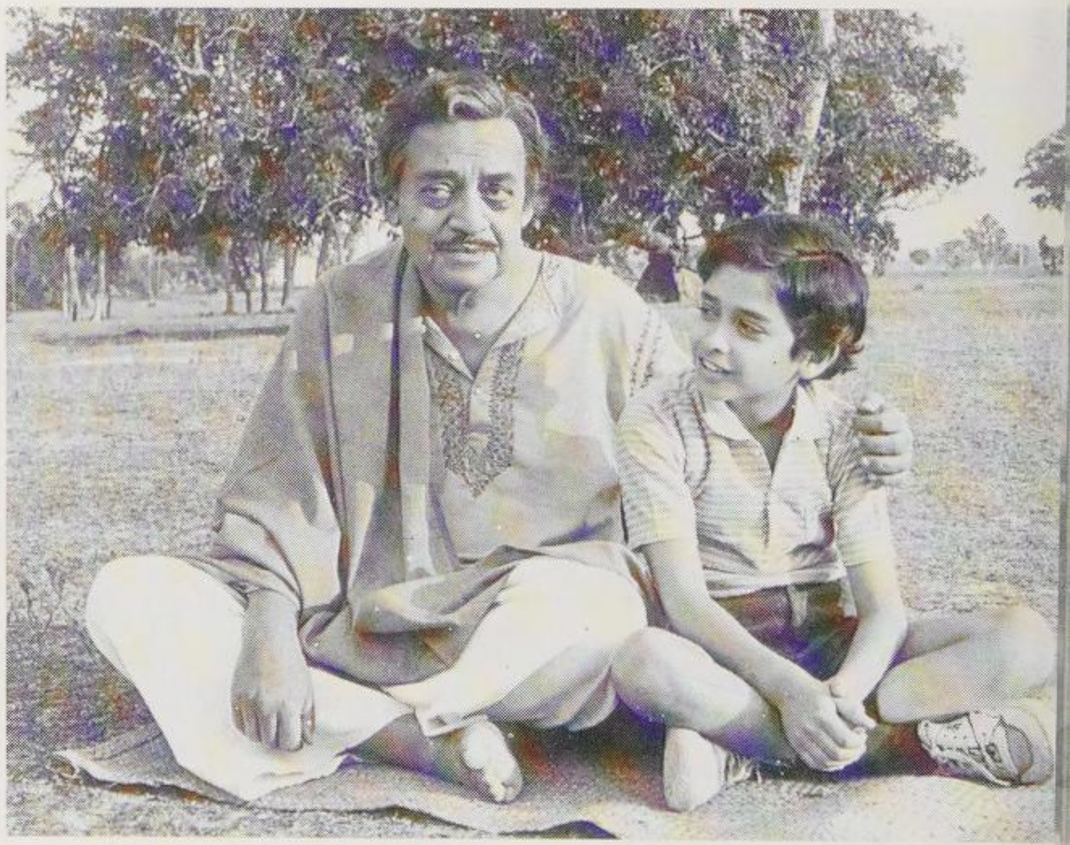


LEFT. Dr. Ashok Gupta (Soumitra Chatterjee, third from left), the man of science battling to save his community from pollution; with Haridas Bagchi (Dipankar Dey, left extreme), the editor who would not carry the truth; Maya (Ruma Guhathakurta), Dr. Gupta's wife, who supports him; and Ranen Haldar (Bhishma Guha Thakurta), his most steadfast supporter. RIGHT. Haridas Bagchi, in his office, with Nishith (Dhritiman Chatterjee) as the industrialist who dictates terms, and Adhir (Manoj Mitra), the printer, all involved in suppressing the truth. Both stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.



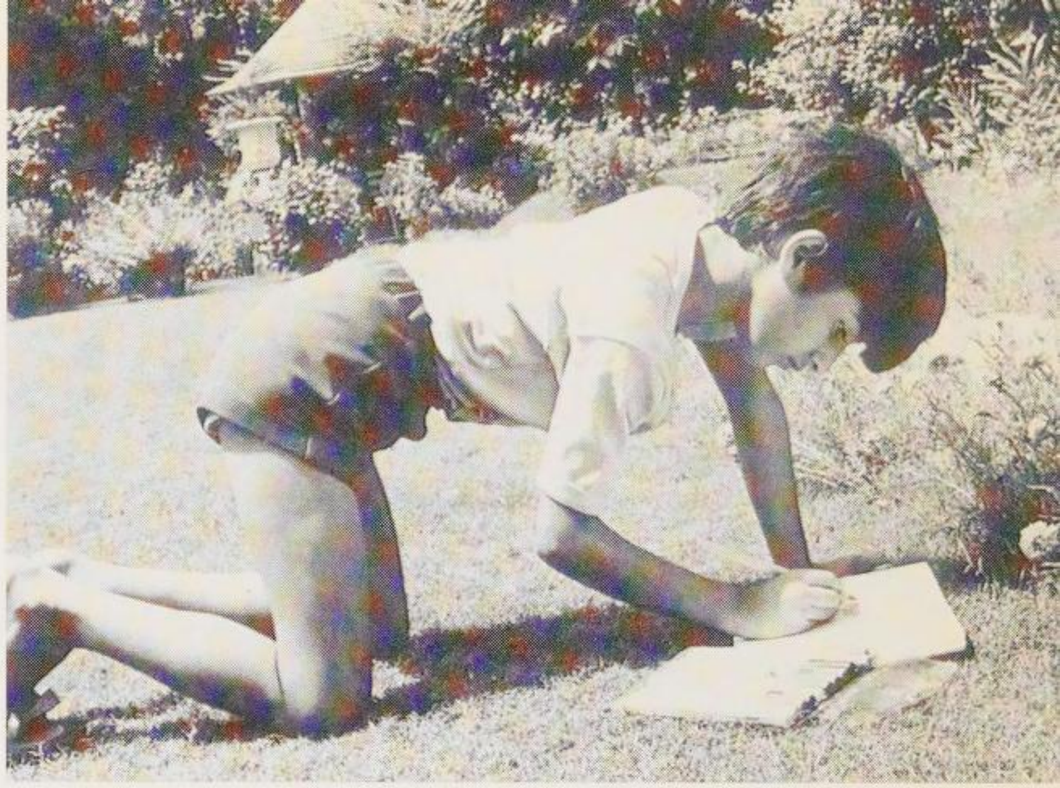
LEFT. The son (Soumitra Chatterjee), mad and yet not so mad, and the father (Ajit Banerjee).
RIGHT. The rest of the family (Lily Chakrabarty, Mamata Shankar, Haradhan Banerjee, and Ranjit Mullick) with the son who is different.
Both stills by Nemai Ghosh.

Agantuk



LEFT. Wife (Mamata Shankar) and Husband (Dipankar Dey), suspicious and wary with the visitor.
RIGHT. The visitor (Utpal Dutt) and the little boy (Bikram Bhattacharya). Both stills by Nemai Ghosh.

Ray's Little Boys



LEFT TO RIGHT. The boy (Ravi Kiran) in *Two*; a street boy in *Sikkim*; Piku (Arjun Guha Thakurta) in *Piku*.
The middle and the right stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

LEFT. Faces of suffering in *Sadgati* : The Gond (Bhaialal Hedao) and Dukhi Chamar (Om Puri).
RIGHT. A scene from *Lakshmaner Shaktishel*, enacted with Soumitra Chatterjee in the lead, for the documentary on *Sukumar Ray*.
Both stills shot by Nemai Ghosh.

From reality to fantasy

Abhijān

THE EXPEDITION

PRODUCED BY Abhijatrik. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay (Banerjee). CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Durgadas Mitra, Nripen Paul, Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 150 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Narsing*), Waheeda Rehman (*Gulabi*), Ruma Guha Thakurta (*Neeli*), Jnanesh Mukherjee (*Joseph*), Charuprakash Ghosh (*Sukhanram*), Robi Ghosh (*Rama*), Arun Roy (*Naskar*), Sekhar Chatterjee (*Rameswar*), Ajit Banerjee (*Banerjee*), Reba Devi (*Joseph's mother*), Abani Mukherjee (*Lawyer*).

Taxi driver Narsing was a Rajput settled in Bengal. He had no relations and lived all alone. Quite a daredevil, he had his taxi permit suspended once when he overtook the car of the district administrator.

Sukhanram, a merchant, was returning home to Shyamnagar with a girl when he met with an accident. Narsing agreed to take him to Shyamnagar for a large sum.

Once at Shyamnagar, Narsing found it difficult to leave the place. He fell in love with Mary Nilima, a teacher in the local missionary school, and also found a friend in her brother Joseph. This suited Sukhanram's designs. He gave Narsing shelter, and money to ply his taxi. He knew he could put him to good use.

The girl Gulabi, brought to Shyamnagar by Sukhanram, would drop in from time to time to look up Narsing. She had a sad and humiliating life. She was no better than a bondslave to Sukhanram. Gulabi wanted to live by clinging on to Narsing. But Narsing was obsessed with Nilima, not knowing that Nilima loved another man.

When Narsing came to know of Nilima's love, he summoned the 'bad girl' Gulabi. Gulabi told him her story—a story of the sufferings and disgrace of an innocent young girl. Narsing's hard Rajput Chhatri's heart melted in sympathy for her.

Sukhanram wanted Narsing to aid and abet him in his black-marketing activities, and offered to make him a partner of his transport business. So long, Narsing had spurned his offer. Now he agreed. He wanted to get along in life, to be a *bhadralok* for which he needed money, and lots of it.

When Narsing was setting out on his journey with Sukhanram's goods Joseph tried to stop him from proceeding. Narsing insulted him no end. But after Narsing had gone some distance, he was overtaken by remorse. He asked himself : What was the purpose of it all? Nilima had gone out of his life. He had asked Gulabi to go away. He had broken his friendship wih Joseph.

Narsing turned his truck back. He would return the goods to Sukhanram and go away with Gulabi. But, in the meantime, Sukhanram had gone with Gulabi, no one knew where. But Narsing must return, he must get his Gulabi back.

Mahānagar

THE BIG CITY

PRODUCED BY R.D. Bansal. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A STORY *Abataranikā* BY Narendranath Mitra. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Debesh Ghosh, Atul Chatterjee, Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 131 min.

CAST : Anil Chatterjee (*Subrata Mazumdar*), Madhabi Mukherjee (*Arati Mazumdar*), Jaya Bhaduri (*Bani*), Haren Chatterjee (*Priyagopal, Subrata's father*), Sefalika Devi (*Sarojini, Subrata's mother*), Prasenjit Sarkar (*Pintu*), Haradhan Banerjee (*Himangsu Mukherjee*), Vicky Redwood (*Edith*).

As Accountant of the New Bharat Bank, Subrata Mazumdar finds it difficult to make both ends meet. His younger sister Bani is two months behind with her school fees; father Priyagopal, a retired schoolmaster, would like a pair of reading glasses; mother Sarojini needs a new tin of zardah every ten days or so. How can Subrata meet all these demands on 250 rupees a month ?

At a hint from Subrata, wife Arati applies for a job, and is called for an interview. Eventually comes the letter of appointment.

When Subrata gives Priyagopal the news, the old man is aghast. 'My daughter-in-law a sales girl?' 'Times have changed, father,' pleads Subrata. But Priyagopal is adamant. 'They may have, but I haven't. You may do what you like, but don't expect any sympathy from me.'

Arati begins to like her job which takes her to the homes of rich people and she enjoys the company of the colleagues. The Anglo-Indian Edith presents Arati with her first lipstick.

The boss, Mr. Mukherjee, a dapper man with big ideas, takes a fancy to Arati and openly expresses his admiration for her work.

But, for Subrata, Arati's transformation is something that disturbs him and he decides to take steps about it. He rings up an influential friend and extracts the promise of a part-time job from him. The same evening he tells Arati about it : 'I've been offered a job, so I don't think you need to work any more. It'll be good for you to give up. You've been losing weight.'

The next morning Arati goes to office with a heavy heart, and the letter of resignation in her bag. But before she has time to submit it, she gets a frantic telephone call from Subrata : 'Don't give up your job yet. I've just lost mine. The bank has closed down.'

From here on, Arati is the only earning member of the family. Subrata suffers the humiliation of watching his wife go out while he sits in bed scanning the 'Wanted' columns.

And what has Priyagopal been doing in the meantime? Since he won't accept money from his son or daughter-in-law, he has devised his own extraordinary method of earning. He goes and seeks out those amongst his old students who have achieved some eminence, and asks for 'Gurudakshina,' some sort of tribute money or favours for an old teacher!

Relationships are strained almost to the breaking point when an incident involving the Anglo-Indian girl suddenly brings the drama to its unexpected conclusion, and Arati is happily left with no cause to regret her decision to work.

Chārulatā

THE LONELY WIFE

PRODUCED BY R.D. Bansal and Co.. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE STORY *Nashtaneed* BY Rabindranath Tagore. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Nripen Paul. Duration : 117 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Amal*), Madhabi Mukherjee (*Charu*), Sailen Mukherjee (*Bhupati*), Shyamal Ghosal (*Umapada*), Gitali Roy (*Mandakini*), Bholanath Koyal (*Braja*), Suku Mukherjee (*Nisikanta*), Dilip Bose (*Shashanka*), Subrata Sen Sharma (*Motilal*), Nilotpal Dey (*Joydeb*), Bankim Ghosh (*Jagannath*).

The year is 1880. A wealthy young intellectual Bhupati Dutta lives in Calcutta and edits and publishes a political weekly in English called *The Sentinel*, leading to the neglect of his sensitive and artistic wife Charu, who spends her long hours of leisure doing needlework and reading Bengali novels.

Sensing his wife's loneliness, Bhupati decides to send for his brother-in-law Umapada (Charu's elder brother) and his wife Mandakini. The latter, Bhupati feels, would be adequate company for Charu.

The two arrive as planned. Umapada assumes the managership of *The Sentinel*, while Mandakini—a rustic, unlettered girl—chatters away by the side of Charu who continues with her artistic and literary pursuits.

At this point arrives Amal to spend a long vacation with his cousin Bhupati. Amal proves to be the perfect companion for Charu. Knowing that Amal has a literary flair, Bhupati suggests that Amal should help Charu with her literary efforts, and encourage whatever talent she might have in her. Almost without realizing it, Charu is drawn more and more towards Amal. Bhupati remains far more concerned with international politics than with domestic problems, and Charu's emotional life remains a closed book to him.

At this point, Umapada makes away with the funds put at his disposal. The theft is discovered by Bhupati after Umapada's departure, and it completely disillusions him. This betrayal of faith is something beyond his wildest dreams. He sorrowfully relates the incident to the only man he still trusts—his dear cousin Amal.

Amal realizes with a sinking heart that the 'betrayal of trust' might apply equally to his own relationship with Charu. The same night, Amal leaves a note for his cousin and sneaks out of the house with his belongings.

His absence is discovered the following morning, and only by a supreme effort of will is Charu able to conceal her true feelings at Amal's heartless action.

Husband and wife go off for rest to a seaside place. As they sit and talk on the beach, it seems as if Charu has wiped away all that was left of Amal's memory.

But disaster strikes immediately after return to Calcutta. A letter from Amal brings back to Charu all the memories that she had been desperately trying to obliterate, and she breaks down weeping, unaware that her husband is standing right behind.

Bhupati reels under the impact of the incredible spectacle and rushes out of the house, unable to bear the sight of an unfaithful wife.

The end of the film finds Bhupati returning home having realized that he too must bear part of the responsibility for the profound tragedy that has wrecked his home and happiness.

Kāpurush O Mahāpurush

THE COWARD AND THE HOLY MAN

PRODUCED BY R.D. Bansal and Co. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE TWO STORIES *Janaiko Kāpurusher Kāhini* BY Premendra Mitra and *Birinchi Baba* BY Parashuram (Rajshekhar Bose). CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Nripen Paul, Atul Chatterjee, Sujit Sarkar.

Kāpurush

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Amitabha Roy*), Madhabi Mukherji (*Karuna Gupta*), Haradhan Banerjee (*Bimal Gupta*).

Duration : 74 min.

On his way to Hasimara (in the Jalpaiguri district) to collect material for a film story, Amitabha Roy's taxi has a breakdown in a small intermediate town. He is offered hospitality for the night by Bimal Gupta, a local tea planter. Left with no choice, Amitabha accepts.

Arriving at Bimal's house, Amitabha is shocked to recognize his host's wife Karuna as the woman he once loved and had let down in a moment of crisis. Unaware of the past relationship between his wife and his guest, Bimal wines and dines Amitabha, and in the course of the evening reveals his own character with disarming frankness.

The more he learns about Bimal, the more Amitabha realizes that the marriage cannot have been a happy one for Karuna.

Amitabha next seeks an opportunity to tell Karuna that he has now the courage to take her away from her husband and thereby atone for his past betrayal. But Karuna hides her own feelings behind a calm exterior.

The next morning it is decided that Amitabha will take the train to Hasimara instead of waiting for the taxi to be repaired. But before that the three go out on a picnic. Bimal falls asleep, still unaware of the growing drama between his wife and his guest.

While Bimal snores, Amitabha scrawls a hasty note to Karuna on a piece of sandwich wrapper : 'I will wait for you at the station. If you still love me, come away. I won't let you down this time.'

Evening finds Amitabha waiting for Karuna at the station. As the hour for the train draws near, his impatience grows.

Does Karuna still love him? Will she leave her husband and come to him? . . .

Karuna comes to the station, but only to ask for her phial of sleeping tablets.

Mahāpurush

CAST : Charuprakash Ghosh (*Birinchi Baba*), Robi Ghosh (*His assistant*), Prasad Mukherjee (*Gurupada Mitter*), Gitali Roy (*Buchki*), Satindra Bhattacharya (*Satya*), Somen Bose (*Nibaran*), Santosh Dutta (*Professor Nani*), Renuka Roy (*Nani's wife*).

Duration : 65 min.

Ever since the death of his wife, Gurupada Mitter, advocate, has been going through a state of deep mental unrest.

On his way back from Benaras with his daughter Buchki, Gurupada encounters Birinchi—a Babaji who claims to be ageless.

Gurupada is impressed and decides to patronize the saint and become his disciple.

Daughter Buchki has her own problems, such as disappointment with her lover Satya, who has written her a love letter consisting solely of quotations from romantic poets. To teach him a lesson, Buchki tells Satya that she is going to renounce him and become a disciple of Birinchi.

Fearing that his romance is in jeopardy, Satya runs to his friend,

philosopher and guide—Nibaran—and enlists his help to free Buchki from the clutches of Birinchi.

Nibaran attends one of Birinchi's religious meetings, listens to his discourses, and realizes that Birinchi is a fraud, but a fraud clever enough to command the respect of a growing band of rich devotees.

Nibaran decides to expose Birinchi, and in the process also expose the foolish devotees who make it possible for swindlers like Birinchi to establish themselves as saints and prophets.

Nāyak

THE HERO

PRODUCED BY R.D. Bansal and Co. ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Subrata Mitra. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Nripen Paul, Atul Chatterjee, Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 120 min.

CAST : Uttam Kumar (*Arindam Mukherjee*), Sharmila Tagore (*Aditi Sen Gupta*), Bireswar Sen (*Mukunda Lahiri*), Somen Bose (*Shankar*), Nirmal Ghosh (*Jyoti*), Premangsu Bose (*Biresh*), Sumita Sanyal (*Promila*), Ranjit Sen (*Mr. Bose*), Bharati Devi (*Manorama, his wife*), Lali Chowdhury (*Bulbul, his daughter*), Kamu Mukherjee (*Pritish Sarkar*), Susmita Mukherjee (*Shefalika, his wife*), Hiralal (*Kamal Misra*), Jogesh Chatterjee (*Aghore, elderly journalist*), Satya Banerjee (*Swamiji*), Gopal Dey (*Conductor*).

Arindam Mukherjee, a top-ranking film star, is on his way to Delhi to receive an official prize. He is in a bitter mood for two reasons: (*a*) his latest film looks like being his first flop; and (*b*) in spite of efforts to suppress it, the morning's papers have published the news of his being involved in a brawl in a club.

In the first class coach in which he is travelling, Arindam meets an interesting cross section of his public. In the restaurant car where he goes to have a cold drink, he meets Aditi, a young attractive editor of a woman's magazine who is travelling in the chair car. Aditi wants to interview Arindam, not because she is interested in him or in films, but because she thinks he would make good saleable 'copy'. Arindam turns her away saying that it isn't good for actors to reveal too much of their flesh and blood to the public. 'It's bad box-office,' he says.

Later, Arindam dozes off in his compartment and has a terrifying dream in which he sinks in quicksands of currency notes and is refused help by a character whom he calls Shankar-da.

A second meeting with Aditi at lunchtime leads him to talk about the dream. Almost inadvertently, he begins to talk about Shankar-da, which takes us back to his early youth. Aditi begins surreptitiously to take notes in her pad.

Arindam describes the days when he took part in amateur theatricals but nourished secret ambitions to join the cinema. He was prevented by Shankar-da, his mentor, who warned him of the ruthless commercial aspect of films. But Shankar-da's sudden death removed the one obstacle from Arindam's path. He took his chance and was an instant success.

Arindam also describes his first day's shooting and how he was snubbed by the great actor Mukunda Lahiri, and how, some years later, the same Mukunda Lahiri, now crushed and forgotten after a series of flops, came to him to beg for a part.

Finally, he describes how he had to desert his old labour leader friend Biresh.

The one story he withholds from Aditi concerns the ruthless and ambitious Promila with whom he had an affair and which ended in an unseemly brawl with her husband.

Aditi realizes that in spite of his fame and money and success, Arindam is essentially a lonely man in need of sympathy and understanding. Out of respect for his frank confession, she tears up the sheets of her interview.

Chiḍiākhānā

THE MENAGERIE

PRODUCED BY Star Productions (Harendranath Bhattacharya). SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Nripen Paul, Atul Chatterjee, Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 137 min.

CAST : Uttam Kumar (*Byomkesh Bakshi*), Sailen Mukherjee (*Ajit*), Susil Majumdar (*Nishanath Sen*), Kanika Majumdar (*Damayanti, his wife*), Subhendu Chatterjee (*Bijoy*), Shyamal Ghosal (*Dr. Bhujanga Das*), Prasad Mukherjee (*Nepal Gupta*), Subira Roy (*Mukul, his daughter*), Nripati Chatterjee (*Mushkil Mia*), Subrata Chatterjee (*Nazar Bibi, his wife*), Gitali Roy (*Banalakshmi*), Kalipada Chakravarti (*Rasiklal*), Chinmoy Roy (*Panugopal*), Jahar Ganguli (*Ramen Mullick*), Bankim Ghosh (*Brajadas*), Nilotpal Dey (*Inspector*).

Nishanath Sen, retired Sessions Judge, owns a nursery-cum-dairy farm which he calls Golap Colony. Here he has given refuge to a number of people who for various reasons are unable to earn a livelihood in the normal way.

These inmates are : Dr. Bhujanga Das who had lost his licence for practising illegal abortion; Nepal Gupta, Ex-Professor of Chemistry, who was involved in the manufacture of explosives; Brajadas, ex-convict turned Vaishnava; Rasiklal, who lost an arm in a factory accident; deaf-mute Panugopal; ex-motor car driver Mushkil Mia who had served a sentence for rash driving; Mushkil's young wife Nazar Bibi; Banalakshmi, a village girl, who had been forced by circumstances to take to streetwalking; Mukul, Nepal's unmarried daughter. Besides these, there are two others—Damayanti—Nishanath's wife—who appears to be half her husband's age, and Nishanath's young nephew, Bijoy.

One rainy morning, Nishanath comes to the private detective Byomkesh Bakshi and asks him to find out whether the ex-film actress Sunayana is hiding in the Colony under a false identity. Some seven years ago, Sunayana's name had been linked with the murder of a jeweller. The police had issued a warrant in Sunayana's name, but she had mysteriously disappeared.

Byomkesh undertakes to investigate and takes the help of Ramen Mullick, a wealthy man-of-the-world with an intimate knowledge of the film business.

Byomkesh begins by taking a look at the Colony and its inmates in the disguise of a Japanese horticulturist. On the same evening, Nishanath is murdered at the point of telephoning Byomkesh to inform him of some important developments.

Investigation reveals the presence of a blackmailer who had been extorting money from Damayanti. The question before Byomkesh is : are the murderer and the blackmailer one and the same person, or are the two crimes unrelated?

A second murder takes place shortly afterwards, again in the Colony.

At this point, the interrogation of the suspects reveals some important clues.

Gradually, the identity of the blackmailer is revealed, and so is a great deal about Nishanath's own past.

Some further shrewd deductions, and a daring sortie into the heart of Calcutta's Anglo-Indian neighbourhood on the heels of a suspect, finally leads Byomkesh to the solution.

The end comes in the Colony itself, where Byomkesh's exposition of the case in the presence of all the suspects results in an unexpected and dramatic climax.

Goopy Gyne Bāghā Byne

THE ADVENTURES OF GOOPY AND BAGHA

PRODUCED BY Nepal Dutta and Asim Dutta for Purnima Pictures. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Upendrakishore Raychaudhuri. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Nripen Paul, Atul Chatterjee, Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 132 min.

CAST : Tapen Chatterjee (*Goopy*), Robi Ghosh (*Bagha*), Santosh Dutta (*King of Shundi/King of Halla*), Jahar Roy (*Prime Minister of Halla*), Santi Chatterjee (*Commander-in-chief of Halla*), Harindranath Chattopadhyay (*Barfi, the magician*), Chinmoy Roy (*Spy of Halla*), Durgadas Banerjee (*King of Amloki*), Gobinda Chakravarti (*Goopy's father*), Prasad Mukherjee (*King of Ghosts*), Haridhan Mukherjee, Abani Chatterjee, Khagen Pathak, Binoy Bose, Prasad Mukherjee (*Village elders*), Joykrishna Sanyal, Tarun Mitra, Ratan Banerjee, Kartik Chatterjee (*Singers at the court of Shundi*), Gopal Dey (*Executioner*), Ajoy Banerjee, Sailen Ganguli, Moni Srimani, Binoy Bose, Kartik Chatterjee (*Visitors to Halla*).

Goopy, the young son of a grocer, who lives in the village of Amloki, has a great urge to sing although he has a hoarse voice and can never get the tunes right. A simple boy, Goopy is persuaded by some crafty elders to sing for the king. Goopy does so, and the king orders him to be driven out of the village.

So, Goopy finds himself on the road, trudging to an unknown destination. In the evening he reaches a forest where he finds Bagha, a dhole player who has met the same fate as Goopy, having been driven out of his village by the king.

They two start singing and drumming to keep off their fear in the growing darkness. The music attracts a group of ghosts who begin dancing to it. At the end of the dance, the King of Ghosts grants Goopy and Bagha three wishes, namely, they will get food and clothes for the asking, travel to any place they like by wearing a pair of magic slippers, and hold everybody spellbound by their singing and drumming.

Now Goopy and Bagha go to Shundi where the king—a good king—has declared a musical contest to select a court musician. The two win the contest, and begin to live happily in Shundi.

The King of Halla, who is really the long-lost twin brother of Shundi, is also a good man who is used as a puppet by a villainous Prime Minister. Instigated by the Prime Minister, Halla declares war on the rich and peaceful kingdom of Shundi.

Shundi hates wars and is deeply upset by the situation, and realizes that the only way to avoid bloodshed is to surrender. But Goopy and Bagha urge Shundi not to surrender, because they believe they will find a way of preventing the war by going into Halla as spies. Faced with a desperate situation, Shundi has to agree to let the boys go.

In Halla, they do some useful spying until, accidentally, they reveal their magical powers, are captured while asleep, and put into prison. Since they have now lost their slippers, they cannot escape by magic, but manage to do so by means of strategy.

The army of Halla is about to march into Shundi, when Goopy and Bagha arrive singing and drumming, and the whole army is frozen into immobility. At the end of the song, Goopy and Bagha wish for a shower of sweetmeats, the sight of which is so tempting to the underfed soldiers of Halla that they throw away their arms and make a mad rush for the sweets.

This gives Goopy and Bagha the opportunity to capture the king of Halla, and transport him by magic to Shundi.

The long-separated brothers are happy to be reunited, and Goopy and Bagha are given the two daughters of the two kings in marriage, and live happily ever after.

Aranyer Din-Rātri

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE FOREST

PRODUCED BY Nepal Dutta and Asim Dutta for Purnima Pictures. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE NOVEL BY THE SAME NAME BY Sunil Gangopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 115 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Asim*), Subhendu Chatterjee (*Sanjoy*), Samit Bhanja (*Harinath*), Robi Ghosh (*Sekhar*), Pahari Sanyal (*Sadasiv Tripathi*), Sharmila Tagore (*Aparna*), Kaveri Bose (*Jaya*), Simi Garewal (*Duli*), Aparna Sen (*Atasi*).

Four friends from Calcutta—Asim, a promising executive, Sanjoy, a labour officer in a jute mill, Hari, an all-round sportsman, and Sekhar, a jobless parasite with a yen for gambling, leave the cares of the city behind them and make for the forests of Palamau to spend a holiday there. With nothing planned in advance, they arrive at a forest bungalow which they acquire by bribing the chowkidar.

In the evening, the friends go exploring in the woods and come to a local wine shop. While they sit drinking, an attractive tribal girl, Duli, comes to them begging for money to buy drinks. Hari is attracted to her and gives her some money.

The next morning, Sekhar wakes up to the sound of female voices. Looking out of the window, he sees two sophisticated young women promenading in the woods in the distance. He announces the discovery, but nobody believes him. Later, confirmation comes from Lakha, a local boy they had picked up to run errands for them.

The young men make their way to the cottage where the young ladies are supposed to be staying. By a stroke of luck, they gain access to it and meet the Tripathi family. The family consists of father Sadasiv, daughter Aparna, widowed daughter-in-law Jaya, and her eight-year old son Tublu.

Asim is interested in Aparna, and even continues to be alone with her while the others play badminton. But she remains aloof.

A series of events follow in which the young men find themselves inadvertently in positions of increasing embarrassment in relation to the women. Asim, particularly, begins to lose his grip on things. At this point, the Conservator of Forests arrives, tells the men off for having acquired the bungalow illegally and asks them to leave. The situation is saved by the arrival of the women on the scene. It turns out that Aparna's father is an old friend of the Conservator. She introduces the men as her close friends, the Conservator apologizes.

In a village fair, where they all go, the four friends get separated from one another. Sekhar gets stuck in a gambling booth. Hari finds Duli and runs off with her. Asim finds the excuse to take Aparna away from her sister-in-law, and Sanjoy, left alone with Jaya, has to escort her back to the cottage.

Hari makes love to Duli in the woods, and thereby recovers his self-confidence. Later, he is beaten up by Lakha, whom he had earlier falsely accused of having stolen his wallet. Jaya is crushed and humiliated when her attempt to seduce Sanjoy fails because of the latter's failure to respond. Aparna and Asim come closer to each other after some doubts and misunderstandings have been cleared up.

When the young women have to leave suddenly because of the wedding of a relative in Calcutta the men realize they have nothing left to do in the forest.

Pratidwandi

THE ADVERSARY

PRODUCED BY Nepal Dutta and Asim Dutta for Purnima Pictures. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME BY Sunil Gangopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : J.D. Irani, Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 110 min.

CAST : Dhritiman Chatterjee (*Siddhartha Chaudhury*), Indira Devi (*Sarojini*), Debraj Roy (*Tunu*), Krishna Bose (*Sutapa*), Kalyan Chatterjee (*Shiben*), Joysree Roy (*Keya*), Sefali (*Lotika*), Soven Lahiri (*Sanyal*), Pisu Majumdar (*Keya's father*), Dhara Roy (*Keya's aunt*), Mamata Chatterjee (*Sanyal's wife*).

The sudden death of his father forces Siddhartha Chaudhury to give up his medical studies and look for a job. But finding a job is no easy matter, for in spite of his obvious capabilities, Siddhartha lacks the all-important element of backing.

At home, Siddhartha has his widowed mother, a younger sister and a younger brother. The sister Sutapa has got a job and is on the way to becoming a success. She might even rise on the social scale because of her good looks and her relentless ambition. Brother Tunu is caught up in revolutionary politics and looks down upon Siddhartha for his conventional attitudes. Siddhartha feels alienated from both of them.

While the days for him are one long round of boredom and aimless wandering, the evenings are somewhat livened up by old college friends. One of them, Adinath, takes him to a prostitute. Siddhartha is disgusted by the encounter, and runs away at the first opportunity.

The same evening he meets Keya, a college girl and the daughter of an income-tax officer. Keya had lost her mother at an early age. The two feel drawn to each other and meet frequently. But the relationship is clouded by Keya's sudden realization that her father is going to marry her maternal aunt. It would perhaps have helped had Siddhartha found that job and stood by her side. At a crucial interview, while waiting to be called, his temper begins to rise at the spectacle of bureaucratic callousness, and in the end he reaches breaking point, gives vent to his pent-up rage, and renounces the job.

He ends up as a medical salesman in a small suburban town, away from the city and the girl he loves. But at least he is now able to stand on his own feet.

Seemābaddha

COMPANY LIMITED

PRODUCED BY Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana for Chitranjali. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME BY Shankar. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : J.D. Irani, Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 112 min.

CAST : Barun Chanda (*Shyamal Chatterjee*), Sharmila Tagore (*Sudarshana known as Tutul*), Paromita Chaudhury (*Shyamal's wife*), Harindranath Chattopadhyay (*Sir Baren Roy*), Haradhan Banerjee (*Talukdar*), Indira Roy (*Shyamal's mother*), Pramod Ganguli (*Shyamal's father*).

After a brilliant academic career in Patna, Shyamalendu Chatterjee joins a British commercial firm manufacturing fans and lamps and quickly rises to the position of Sales Manager.

Living in a luxurious flat in Calcutta with his wife Dolan, Chatterjee now looks forward to achieving his ultimate aim : to become a Director of Hindustan-Peters Ltd.

Dolan's younger sister Sudarshana comes to spend a holiday in Calcutta. As a teenager in Patna, Sudarshana had harboured a secret admiration for Chatterjee at the time her elder sister got married to him. This time, in Calcutta, this admiration begins to develop into something more serious. Her feelings are reciprocated by Chatterjee. Sudarshana has come like a breath of fresh air into his routine existence.

At this point, Chatterjee suddenly finds himself facing a major crisis : a consignment of ceiling fans meant for export to Iraq turns out on final inspection to be defective. Chatterjee realizes that his firm now faces the prospect of a heavy penalty as well as loss of prestige.

After much pondering, Chatterjee takes the only course open to him; with the help of the Personnel Officer, he secretly manoeuvres a strike in the factory which leads to a lock-out. This serves as an excuse for the delay in shipment, and the crisis is thus averted.

On the strength of his clever handling of the situation, Chatterjee is promoted to the Board of Directors. He is showered with congratulations from everybody, except a deeply disillusioned Sudarshana. She now knows only too well what the rat-race means.

Ashani Sanket

DISTANT THUNDER

PRODUCED BY Sarbani Bhattacharya for Balaka Movies. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME BY Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : J.D. Irani, Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 101 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Gangacharan Chakravarti*), Babita (*Ananga, his wife*), Ramesh Mukherjee (*Biswas*), Chitra Banerjee (*Moti*), Gobinda Chakravarti (*Dinabandhu*), Sandhya Roy (*Chhutki*), Noni Ganguli (*Scarface Jadu*), Sheli Pal (*Mokshada*), Suchita Roy (*Khenti*), Anil Ganguli (*Nibaran*), Debatosh Ghosh (*Adhar*).

The time is 1942-43. The place, a remote little village in Bengal.

A world war is on, but to the villagers it only means an occasional pretty sight of planes flying overhead.

Young Ganga and his wife Ananga are the only Brahmins, newly settled, in this village of low-caste peasants. Ganga is respected by all as the priest, the doctor, as well as the only teacher in the school he has himself started with the help of the rich peasant Biswas. Biswas also helps him with a free monthly quota of provisions.

Ananga, childless still, is friendly with the peasant women, particularly with the jolly Chhutki, wife of the peasant Hiru.

Life, on the whole, is pleasant.

One day the old Brahmin Dinu tells Ganga of the sudden rise in the price of rice in some neighbouring villages. 'This is because of the war,' says Dinu. 'Our king is fighting the Germans and the Japanese, and rice is being sent to our fighting men.'

Ganga does not take this seriously at first, but soon signs begin to appear which suggest that in spite of a good harvest, a man-made famine may be in the offing.

As the price of rice goes spiralling upwards, the whole aspect of the peaceful village changes. Peasants sell off their stocks, and then have to go starving, rice shops are looted; the once-generous Biswas tells Ganga bluntly that he cannot help him any more; the peasant wife Chhutki has to yield to the advances of Scarface Jadu for a handful of rice. Looking for edible roots in a forest, Ananga is nearly raped by an unknown man.

At the height of the famine, Moti, the untouchable woman, an old friend of Ananga from a nearby village, comes to Ananga to beg for rice and dies on her doorstep.

In this darkest of hours, Ananga tells her husband that she is going to have a baby, their first child.

Sonār Kellā

THE GOLDEN FORTRESS

PRODUCED BY The Government of West Bengal. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON RAY'S OWN NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : J.D. Irani, Anil Talukdar. Duration : 115 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Pradosh Mitter known as Felu*), Santosh Dutta (*Lalmohan Ganguli known as Jatayu*), Siddhartha Chatterjee (*Tapesh Mitter known as Topse*), Kushal Chakraborti (*Mukul Dhar*), Sailen Mukherjee (*Dr. Hemanga Hazra*), Ajoy Banerjee (*Amiyanath Burman*), Kamu Mukherjee (*Mandar Bose*), Santanu Bagchi (*Mukul 2*), Harindranath Chattopadhyay (*Uncle Sidhu*), Sunil Sarkar (*Sudhir Dhar, Mukul's father*), Shiuli Mukherjee (*Mukul's mother*), Haradhan Banerjee (*Tapesh's father*), Rekha Chatterjee (*Tapesh's mother*), Ashoke Mukherjee (*Journalist*), Bimal Chatterjee (*Advocate*).

Mukul, the six year old son of Sudhir Dhar, shows signs of having memories of a previous birth. He keeps talking and drawing pictures of a place with peacocks, camels and a 'golden fortress'. Parapsychologist Dr Hazra examines the boy and surmises that the place may be somewhere in western Rajasthan. He offers to take Mukul to Jodhpur to begin a search for the golden fortress.

One day before their departure, Mukul is interviewed by a journalist. Among other things, Mukul talks of having seen precious jewels in the house where he was born. The journalist turns this into a hidden treasure story which comes out in the papers the next day.

Two crooks, Burman and Bose, read the story, and set out for Jodhpur the next day in the hope of finding the treasure.

Meanwhile, events have led Sudhir to suspect that his son may be in danger. He enlists the aid of private detective Felu (Pradosh) Mitter. Felu and his cousin Tapesh leave for Jodhpur a day after the departure of Bose and Burman.

The two crooks manage to dispose of Hazra, win Mukul's trust, and continue on their journey to Jodhpur.

Arriving in Jodhpur, Felu and Tapesh check in at the Circuit House where Dr Hazra is supposed to be staying. Dr Hazra is now being impersonated by Burman, while Bose has assumed the role of a globe trotter. Felu presents himself to Burman-Hazra, who realizes that his task is not going to be an easy one.

Mukul keeps rejecting fort after fort, and shows signs of becoming restive. Burman, who had once been a magician, decides to try hypnosis on the boy to revive his memory. The plan succeeds. The boy names Jaisalmer as the place of his former birth.

Burman manages to hoodwink Felu and sets off for Jaisalmer by train with the boy. Soon after, a chance clue helps Felu to realize that Burman is an imposter. Working on a hunch based on another clue, Felu sets out for Jaisalmer in a taxi. Bose's attempts to intercept him fail.

The climax comes in the golden fortress, where Felu is able to free Mukul from danger, as well as from his obsession.

Jana Aranya

THE MIDDLE MAN

PRODUCED BY Subir Guha (Indus Films). SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME BY Shankar. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : J.D. Irani, Anil Talukdar, Sujit Ghosh. Duration : 131 min.

Cast : Pradip Mukherjee (*Somnath Banerjee*), Satya Banerjee (*Somnath's father*), Dipankar Dey (*Bhombol*), Lily Chakravarti (*Kamala, his wife*), Aparna Sen (*Somnath's girlfriend*), Gautam Chakravarti (*Sukumar*), Sudeshna Das (*Karuna known as Juthika*), Utpal Dutt (*Bishu*), Robi Ghosh (*Mr. Mitter*), Bimal Chatterjee (*Adok*), Arati Bhattacharya (*Mrs. Ganguli*), Padma Devi (*Mrs. Biswas*), Soven Lahiri (*Goenka*), Santosh Dutta (*Hiralal*), Bimal Deb (*Jagabandhu, MLA*), Ajeya Mukherjee (*Pimp*), Kalyan Sen (*Mr. Baksi*), Alokendu Dey (*Fakirchand, office bearer*).

Thanks to the callousness of an examiner, Somnath, a bright student, gets an ordinary pass in his B. A. Examinations. Mainly as a result of this, all his efforts to get a job fail. Tired and frustrated after an abortive interview, Somnath runs across Bishu-da, an elderly friend, who suggests that he try his hand at business.

Next day, with his father's consent, Somnath goes to see Bishu, who explains the basics of the brokerage business to him and introduces him to Mr. Adok, an accountant, with whose help Somnath gets his first commission.

In the hope of supplying a brand of optical whitener, Somnath takes a sample to a cotton mill and meets Goenka, the purchasing officer. But later he is told that although the lab report has come in Goenka has not placed an order with Somnath. Desperate, Somnath gets in touch with Natabar Mitter, PRO, who tells Somnath of the chink in Goenka's armour; his wife had polio as a child and is no good in bed. Mitter promises to supply the 'goods' which Somnath must deliver to Goenka. Goenka would then hand him a chit which would get him the order for the whitener.

On the appointed day after a few unsuccessful attempts to get a callgirl, Mitter takes Somnath to a commercial school in the Anglo-Indian quarters. Charan, the pimp-cum-durwan, asks them to wait for a new girl, Juthika. Mitter has an appointment and leaves Somnath to fend for himself.

Juthika arrives. She is Karuna, the sister of Somnath's closest friend. Somnath recognizes her and decides to drop the whole thing. But Karuna steadfastly refuses to recognize him and keeps insisting that she is Juthika. Somnath is left with no choice but to take her to the hotel and hand her over to Goenka.

Shatranj Ke Khilāḍi

THE CHESS PLAYERS

PRODUCED BY Suresh Jindal (Devaki Chitra). SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Munshi Premchand. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Narinder Singh. Duration : 113 min.

DIALOGUE : Satyajit Ray, Shama Zaidi, Javed Siddiqi. COSTUMES : Shama Zaidi. SONGS SUNG BY : Reba Muhuri, Birju Maharaj, Calcutta Youth Choir. DANCE DIRECTOR : Birju Maharaj. DANCES PERFORMED BY Saswati Sen, Gitanjali, Kathak Ballet Troupe, New Delhi. NARRATION : Amitabh Bachchan.

CAST : Sanjeev Kumar (*Mirza Sajjad Ali*), Saeed Jaffrey (*Mir Roshan Ali*), Amjad Khan (*Wajid Ali Shah*), Richard Attenborough (*General Outram*), Shabana Azmi (*Khurshid*), Farida Jalal (*Nafeesa*), Veena (*Aulea Begum, Queen Mother*), David Abraham (*Munshi Nandlal*), Victor Banerjee (*Ali Naqi Khan, Prime Minister*), Farook Shaikh (*Aqil*), Tom Alter (*Captain Weston*), Leela Mishra (*Hiria*), Barry John (*Dr. Joseph Fayrer*), Samarth Narain (*Kalloo*), Budho Advani (*Imtiaz Hussain*), Kamu Mukherjee (*Bookie*).

The year is 1856 and the place is Lucknow, capital of Avadh. On the throne of Avadh sits Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, indifferent ruler but a fine poet and musician.

In Lucknow live two jagirdar friends, Mirza Sajjad Ali and Mir Roshan Ali, whose only occupation is playing chess. Mirza's neglected wife, Khurshid, would like to wean her husband away from his obsession, but all her efforts to do so fail. Mir's wife Nafeesa, on the other hand, encourages her husband to play so that she can carry on an affair with her cousin.

A bigger game of chess — a political one — is being played by the East India Company. The Governor General Lord Dalhousie has decided to use the Nawab's misrule as a pretext for deposing him and bringing Avadh under British rule. Acting under instructions from Dalhousie, General Outram, the Resident of Lucknow, presents his ultimatum to Wajid.

Mir and Mirza learn that the Company's troops are approaching Lucknow. Mortally afraid that they may he called up to fight for the Nawab, the two friends run away from home and continue to play in a secluded village away from the gathering political storm.

Wajid is faced with a situation where he must either give up his throne or fight the Company, with whom the Nawabs of Avadh have been friendly for over a century. Wajid decides on a moral victory and surrenders.

Anxious to avoid fighting for their ruler, Mir and Mirza end up fighting bitterly with each other over their game.

The troops march into Lucknow. Avadh passes into the hands of the Company. As dusk falls, the two friends are reconciled and resume playing their game of bloodless combat.

Joi Bābā Felunāth

THE ELEPHANT GOD

PRODUCED BY R.D. Bansal and Co. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON HIS OWN NOVELETTE. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Robin Sen Gupta. Duration : 112 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Pradosh Mitter known as Feluda*), Santosh Dutta (*Lalmohan Ganguli known as Jatayu*), Siddhartha Chatterjee (*Tapesh known as Topse*), Utpal Dutt (*Maganlal Meghraj*), Jit Bose (*Ruku Ghosal*), Haradhan Banerjee (*Umanath Ghosal*), Bimal Chatterjee (*Ambika Ghosal*), Biplab Chatterjee (*Bikash Sinha*), Satya Banerjee *(Nibaran Chakravarti*), Moloy Roy (*Gunomoy Bagchi*), Santosh Sinha (*Shashi Pal*), Manu Mukherjee (*Machhli Baba*), Indubhusan Gujral (*Inspector Tewari*), Kamu Mukherjee (*Arjun*).

Private investigator Pradosh Mitter (Felu) arrives in Benaras for a holiday with his young cousin Tapesh and his friend Lalmohan Ganguly, popular writer of boys' adventure stories.

The same day, they go to take a look at the mysterious Machhli Baba, who is supposed to have swam his way to Kashi from Prayag and who gives *darshan* to his many *bhaktas* every evening at the Darbhanga Ghat. Here they meet Umanath Ghosal, who informs Felu of the theft of a rare and valuable gold statuette of Ganesha from his father's safe.

Felu is engaged by Umanath's father Ambika Ghosal, a retired lawyer, to unravel the mystery of the missing Ganesha. Felu begins by interrogating the members of the Ghosal household which includes, besides Umanath and Ambika, Umanath's eight-year old son Ruku who talks in riddles and identifies himself with Captain Spark, a daredevil hero of boys' fiction. Also living with the Ghosals is young Bikash, a dependent of the family.

Umanath informs Felu that the rich businessman Maganlal, who is suspected of smuggling art objects out of the country, had offered him a large sum of money for the Ganesha, but Umanath had turned him down.

Later, Felu has an encounter with Maganlal, who offers him money to give up his investigations. Felu refuses to accept the bribe and is humiliated by Maganlal. The mystery deepens as old Shashi-Babu, image-maker in the employ of the Ghosals, is murdered.

Maganlal's threat notwithstanding, Felu continues with his investigations and finally solves the mystery of the missing Ganesha.

Hirak Rājār Deshey

THE KINGDOM OF DIAMONDS

PRODUCED BY The Government of West Bengal. ORIGINAL SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Robin Sengupta. Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 118 min.

Cast : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Udayan, the school-teacher*), Utpal Dutt (*King Hirak*), Tapen Chatterjee (*Goopy*), Robi Ghosh (*Bagha*), Santosh Dutta (*King of Shundi/Gabeshak, inventor*), Pramod Ganguli (*Udayan's father*), Alpana Gupta (*Udayan's mother*), Rabin Majumdar (*Charandas*), Sunil Sarkar (*Fazl Mia*), Nani Ganguli (*Balaram*), Ajoy Banerjee (*Bidushak*), Kartik Chatterjee (*Court Poet*), Haridhan Mukherjee (*Court astrologer*), Bimal Deb, Tarun Mitra, Gopal Dey, Sailen Ganguli, Samaresh Banerjee, Samir Mukherjee (*Ministers*).

Granted three wishes by a benign king of the ghosts, Goopy and Bagha can get food and clothes for the asking, hold people spellbound with their singing and drumming, and travel to any place in the twinkling of an eye once they put on the magic slippers.

Married to the two daughters of the King of Shundi, Goopy and Bagha have been leading an uneventful life when they receive an invitation from the king of Hirak who is celebrating his accession to the throne.

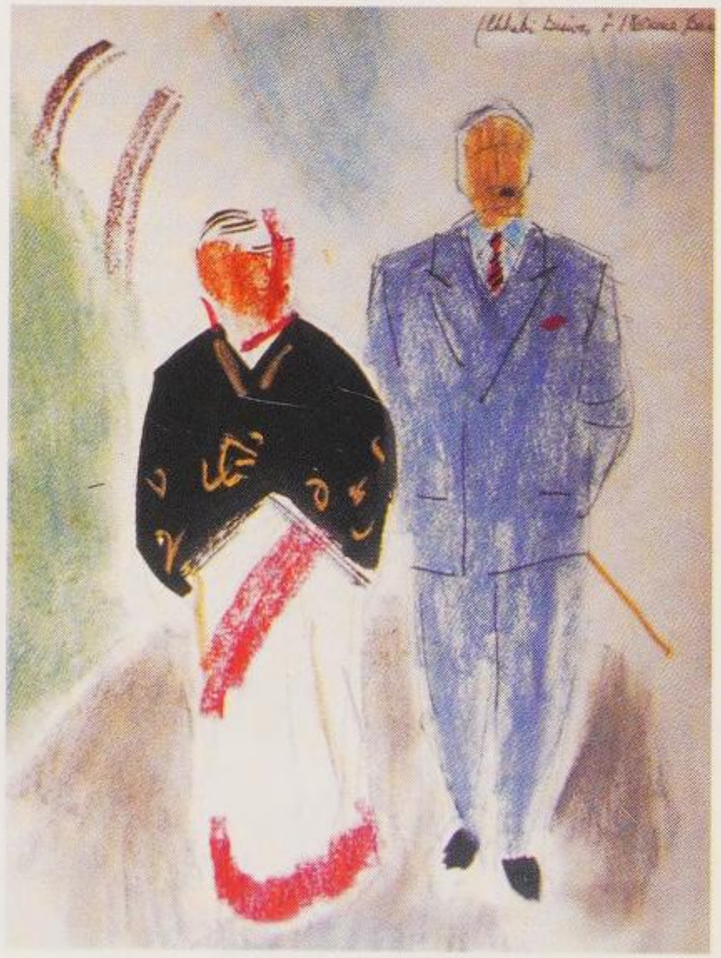
Named after the diamond mine that is its main source of wealth, Hirak is a police state ruled by a tyrant king. A crazy inventor has just built a brainwashing machine which turns dissenters into loyal subjects by having rhymed couplets fed into their brains.

The king has also decided to close down the only school in Hirak run by an idealist teacher named Udayan. Learning helps one to distinguish between right and wrong and this the king doesn't approve of. Sensing that he may be captured and brainwashed too, Udayan goes into hiding and plots to dethrone the king.

Singing their way around the country, Goopy and Bagha chance upon Udayan in a mountain cave. Udayan learns that Goopy and Bagha have been invited to Hirak, and reveals to them the real story of the plight of the people of the Hirak Kingdom. The three decide to team up and bring about the downfall of the tyrant.

The planned uprising nearly fails when Udayan is captured by the police, but Goopy and Bagha, aided by their magical music-making, finally succeed in freeing Udayan and thwarting the king. Victory is achieved by the three, aided by the peasants, the mine workers and Udayan's young pupils.

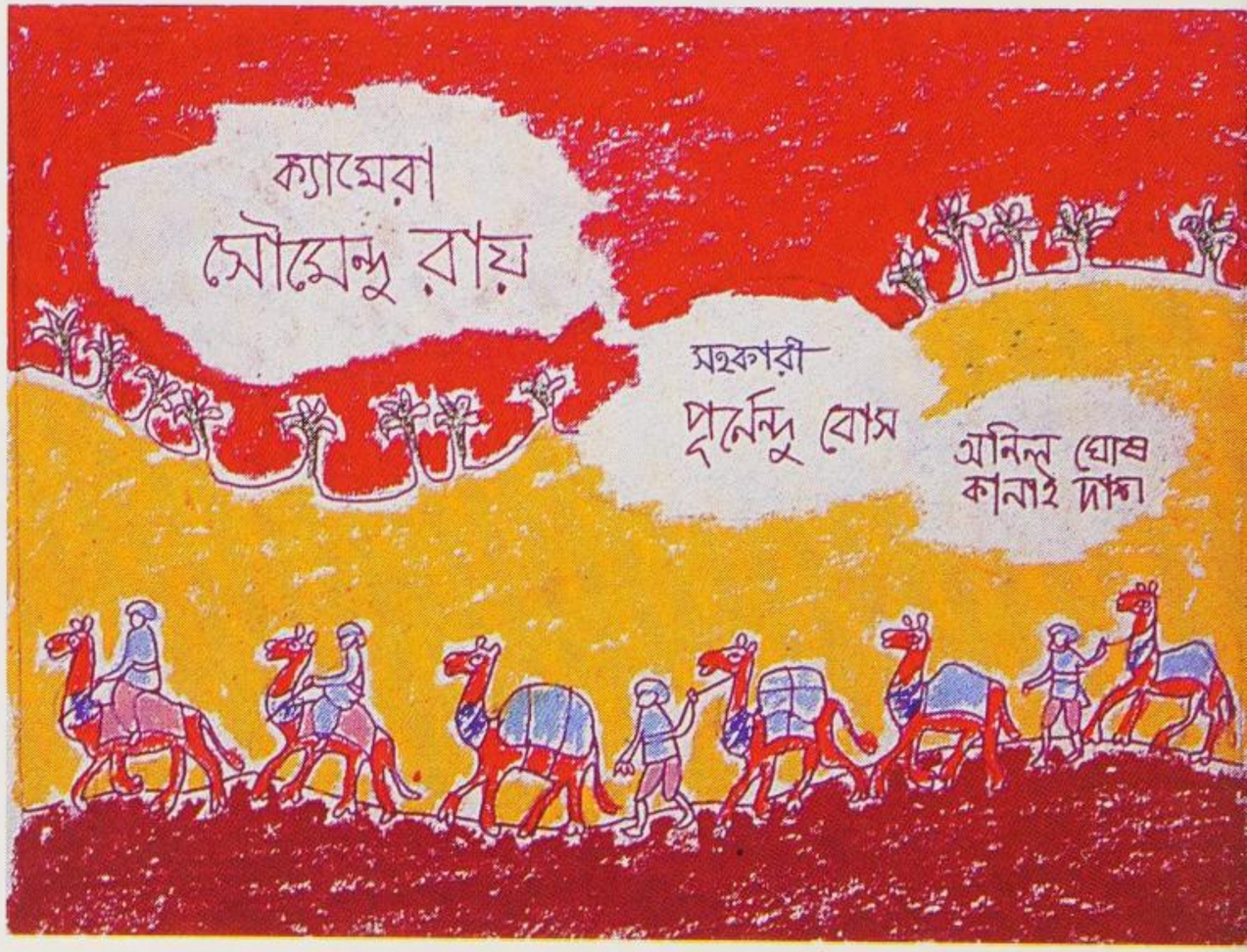
ABOVE. Design for a first release brochure for *Pather Panchali* never used.
RIGHT. Costume designs for *Hirak Rajar Deshey*.



Working sketches for costume designs for his films.

Above Left. *Hirak Rajar Deshey.*
Above Right. *Kanchanjungha.*
Right. *Joi Baba Felunath* — the knife-throwing board.

ABOVE. Costume and set designs for *Gharey–Bairey.*
TOP RIGHT. The *Gharey–Bairey* drawing room.
BOTTOM RIGHT. Scenic design for the lawyer's bedroom in *Sonar Kella.*



Credit cards for *Sonar Kella* : images of adventures in desert land.

Gharey-Bāirey

THE HOME AND THE WORLD

PRODUCED BY National Film Development Corporation of India. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON A NOVEL OF THE SAME NAME BY Rabindranath Tagore. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Robin Sengupta. Duration : 140 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Sandip*), Victor Banerjee (*Nikhilesh*), Swatilekha Chatterjee (*Bimala*), Gopa Aich (*Nikhilesh's sister-in-law*), Jennifer Kapoor (*Miss Gilby, English governess*), Manoj Mitra (*Headmaster*), Indrapramit Roy (*Amulya*), Bimal Chatterjee (*Kulada*).

In 1905, pursuing the colonial policy of Divide and Rule, the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, proposes splitting up Bengal into two separate administrative units.

Curzon's policy is violently opposed by a large section of the middleclass intelligentsia, giving rise to widespread terrorist activity and boycott of British goods. Sandip Mukherjee, a leader of this political movement, comes to Suksayar, the country estate of his friend Nikhilesh Chaudhury, to spread his gospel.

Nikhilesh, a man of modern liberal views, is keen that his wife Bimala should come out of orthodox seclusion and mix with his friend. Bimala has resisted this for a long time, but agrees at last to meet Sandip.

Bimala is swept off her feet by Sandip's charisma and lively charm, which contrast so strongly with her husband's calm sobriety.

Sandip, too, is attracted to Bimala and decides to make Suksayar his centre of political activity, staying as a guest in Nikhilesh's house. Although Nikhilesh is a stern critic of Curzon's policy, he believes that the boycott movement can only harm the poor people, since there are no adequate Indian substitutes for the foreign goods which are being boycotted.

Sandip carries on his political activities in defiance of Nikhilesh's views, while Bimala's emotional involvement grows deeper by the day.

Nikhilesh realizes that his wife has fallen in love with Sandip, and the political situation is becoming more and more tense. He can force Sandip to leave—in fact, he knows that Sandip is less a true patriot than a man driven by the lust for power—but he realizes that it wouldn't bring him closer to his wife who has yet to see through Sandip's sham.

Only at the last moment does Bimala realize that her infatuation has been with a man whose only concern is self-glorification. She rejects Sandip and goes back to her husband who forgives her.

But it is too late. Communal riot has broken out. Sandip runs away to safety. Nikhilesh rides off into the night to face the hostile mob . . .

Ganashatru

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

PRODUCED BY National Film Development Corporation of India, SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE PLAY, *An Enemy of the People,* by Henrik Ibsen. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 100 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Dr Ashok Gupta*), Ruma Guha Thakurta (*Maya, his wife*), Mamata Shankar (*Indrani, his daughter*), Dhritiman Chatterjee (*Nishith*), Dipankar Dey (*Haridas Bagchi*), Subhendu Chatterjee (*Biresh*), Manoj Mitra (*Adhir*), Bhishma Guha Thakurta (*Ranen Haldar*), Rajaram Yagnik (*Bhargava*), Satya Banerjee (*Manmatha*), Gobinda Mukherjee (*Chandan*).

The story takes place in a small town in West Bengal called Chandipur which regularly draws a large number of visitors for its healthy climate and for the recently built temple of Tripureshwar which is considered to be particularly holy.

Dr Ashok Gupta, a physician wholly dedicated to his profession, discovers that cases of jaundice, typhoid and other water-borne diseases have suddenly made their appearance in Chandipur. He also discovers that the cases are occurring mostly in the area where the temple stands. He sends a sample of the water for analysis. The report reveals that the water is full of bacteria.

Dr Gupta, who is an agnostic, immediately approaches his younger brother Nishith, who is the chairman of the Municipality, and suggests that the leakage should be immediately located and repaired, and the temple closed to the public until it is safe for the people to drink the holy water again.

He is strongly opposed not only by his brother, who is a believer, but also by Mr Bhargava, a rich businessman who built the temple and who is Nishith's friend and business partner.

A distraught Dr Gupta turns to the only newspaper in town, a supposedly progressive daily, to print an article on the crisis. The editor turns him down for fear of public antagonism.

The doctor now arranges a meeting where he hopes to inform the public verbally about the crisis. The meeting is wrecked by the machinations of Nishith and other vested interests. The doctor is branded as a heretic and a public enemy.

In deep despair, Dr Gupta decides to leave Chandipur, his birthplace and a town he loves. Finally, however, his faith is revived when he discovers that a whole group of young educated people of the town are all on his side and ready to fight for his cause and bring the bureaucrats to their senses.

Shākhā-Prashākhā

BRANCHES OF A TREE

PRODUCED BY Satyajit Ray Productions (Calcutta), Erato Films (Paris) and D.D. Productions (Paris). ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Barun Raha. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Pierre Lenoir. Duration : 120 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee (*Prashanta*), Ranjit Mallick (*Pratap*), Dipankar Dey (*Prabir*), Haradhan Banerjee (*Prabodh*), Mamata Shankar (*Tapati*), Lily Chakraborty (*Uma*), Ajit Banerjee (*Anandamohan*), Master Soham Chakraborty (*Dingo*), Bhishma Guha Thakurta (*Dr Ashoke De*), Kamu Mukherjee (*Ramdohin*), Rajaram Yagnik (*Dr. Sahay*), Pradip Mukherjee (*Bijan, journalist*), Sunil Guptakabiraj (*Dr Shome*), Ashoke Mukherjee (*Joydev*), Tarun Mitra (*President*).

The place is Anandapur, a township in a mica mining area in Chhoto Nagpur, and the time is January 1990.

The film opens on the seventieth birthday of the most eminent citizen of the town — Anandamohan Majumdar—who, through sheer hard work and honesty—had risen from a low position in the Orient Mica Works to be its General Manager.

He how lives a retired life in his large mansion with his senile father and his second son Prashanta, who has been in a state of mental imbalance since a motor accident while studying in England. Anandamohan has three other sons—Prabodh, Prabir and Pratap—who are all well placed in jobs in Calcutta. Although stories about corruption, black money and the corrosion in values in the city reach his ears, Ananda still believes that if a man decides to be honest, he can still be so and make good in life. 'I am sure,' he says, 'that my sons believe in the two maxims that I've always held dear—Work is worship, and Honesty is the best policy.'

At the civic reception in honour of his birthday, Anandamohan has a heart attack.

The family consisting of the eldest son Prabodh and his wife Uma, the third son Prabir, his wife Tapati and his five year old son Dingo, and the youngest son Pratap arrive from Calcutta. They stay for a week in course of which we learn that Prabodh, the general manager of a big company, has accepted the fact of a change of values and has taken recourse to black money in order to live well.

The same applies to the businessman Prabir. The youngest Pratap had been an advertising executive, but gave up his job when he learned that a senior colleague whom he loved and respected as an elder brother, had been involved in a swindle and pocketed a huge amount of money from one of their own clients. Disillusioned, Pratap has now joined a theatrical company.

On the day of the family's departure, Prabir's son Dingo tells Anandamohan that he had overheard his father and his uncle accusing each other of resorting to black money.

The revelation shatters Anandamohan. But, Prashanta comes into his room, and Anandamohan suddenly realizes that he still has one son who is incorruptible. The two grasp each other's hands.

Āgantuk

THE STRANGER

PRODUCED BY National Film Development Corporation. ORIGINAL SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Barun Raha. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 119 min.

Cast : Dipankar Dey (*Sudhindra Bose*), Mamata Shankar (*Anila Bose*), Bikram Bhattacharya (*Satyaki/Bablu*), Utpal Dutt (*Manomohan Mitra*), Dhritiman Chatterjee (*Prithwish Sengupta*), Robi Ghosh (*Ranjan Rakshit*), Subrata Chatterjee (*Chhanda Rakshit*), Pramode Ganguly (*Tridib Mukherjee*), Ajit Banerjee (*Sital Sarkar*).

Anila, wife of Sudhindra Bose, receives a letter purported to be from her maternal uncle, Manomohan Mitra, who had left home 35 years ago, and was apparently coming back home from abroad for the first time. Back in India at last, preparatory to his departure for Australia, and on learning from Sital Sarkar, a friend of the family, that Anila was his sole surviving close relation, it was his dear wish to spend a week in Calcutta as her guest.

Sudhindra reacts strongly to the letter, but Anila persuades him to let the old man come.

Manomohan arrives and, with his ebullient good humour, he is almost immediately accepted as great-uncle by Anila's only son—eleven year old Satyaki. Around this time Anila suddenly remembers her grandfather's will. Sudhindra immediately seizes on the idea—Your uncle has actually come with the sole purpose of claiming his share, and all this show of affection for his niece and his grand nephew was just eyewash.

Sudhindra's enquiries reveal that there was indeed provision in the will for Manomohan, and the money is now in the possession of the executor of the will, Sital Sarkar, who lives in Santiniketan.

Sudhindra realizes that a showdown with Manomohan is called for, and he enlists the aid of his barrister friend, Sengupta, It is in this encounter with Sengupta, that Manomohan's whole personality, his preoccupations and his philosophy are revealed. It turns out that he has spent most of his thirty-five years in close contact with tribals in India and in North and South America.

Sengupta dismisses savage society and finally insults the old man for extorting hospitality from his friends.

Next morning, Anila and Sudhindra discover that Manomohan is gone. Suspecting that he has left to collect his share, Sudhindra, Anila and Satyaki set off in their car for Santiniketan.

After knowing of his whereabouts from Sital Sarkar, the three go to a nearby Santhal village and meet Manomohan. 'I knew you would come,' says Manomohan, 'I want you to wait for the dance in the afternoon . . . Then we shall go back to Calcutta.'

In the exultant tribal dancing and singing, the whole rich culture of the Santhals comes alive. Anila finds herself intoxicated by the rhythm and rushes to lock hands with one of the women and begins dancing with abandon.

Back in Calcutta, just before his departure for the East, Manomohan hands an envelope to Sudhindra — 'a small parting gift to the family for their extremely civilized and generous hospitality'. The gift turns out to be a cheque made out by Sital Sarkar which transfers the entire amount of Manomohan's share to Anila Bose.

Documentaries and short features

Rabindranath Tagore

PRODUCED BY Films Division, Government of India. SCRIPT, COMMENTARY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Jyotirindra Moitra. EDITOR : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Satyen Chatterjee, Durgadas Mitra. SONG AND DANCES : Gitabitan. NARRATION : Satyajit Ray. Duration : 54 min.

CAST : Raya Chatterjee, Sovanlal Ganguli, Smaran Ghosal, Purnendu Mukherjee, Kallol Bose, Subir Bose, Phani Nan, Norman Ellis.

On the occasion of the centenary of the birth of Rabindranath Tagore, the film sets out to trace Tagore's life partly by skilful use of documents (paintings, photographs, books and manuscripts) and partly by reconstruction with live actors. Complete with genealogical tables, social and historical background, national and international, it goes beyond the biographical brief to capture the rich, multifaceted development of the artist as writer, painter, composer—and the conscience of his times—responding as a passionate humanist to the changing history, the country's struggle for independence and social change, and the crisis in civilization, the theme of one of the poet's last great statements. A feat of precision, it documents, encapsulates and assesses Tagore's achievements in all the fields of creativity that he touched.

Two

PRODUCED BY Esso World Theatre. ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. ART DIRECTION : Bansi Chandragupta. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITOR : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 16 min.

CAST : Ravi Kiran.

Two was made as part of a trilogy of short films from India, commissioned by US Public Television service, the other two celebrating the musical artistry of Ravi Shankar, and dance performances by Bombay's Little Ballet Troupe and Children's Little Theatre, Calcutta.

Without dialogue, *Two* portrays a conflict between two Indian boys from opposite economic poles and castes. One is rich and the other, a poor slum boy. The first has all the best he could want, the second almost nothing. But the first is determined to prove his superiority. When the slum boy brings out a plaintive flute, the rich boy moves a hoarse toy trumpet and drowns the absorbing tune of the flute; when the slum boy switches to a warrior's mask and spear, the rich boy becomes a cowboy with a revolver; and when the slum boy decides to fly a kite, the rich one shoots it down with an air rifle. Finally, the slum boy gives up the attempts to be friends and the rich boy retires satisfied to play his toy robots alone. But not for long—their mechanical clamour cannot totally wipe out the notes of the flute that now float maddeningly through his window once more. The little episode ends with the rich boy considering his unspoken defeat, as first one and then another of the soulless robots trips over itself and crashes to the floor.

Sikkim

PRODUCED BY The Chogyal of Sikkim. SCRIPT, COMMENTARY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITOR : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Amulya Das. Duration : 52 min. (approx.).

A close look at the cultural variety and richness of Sikkim, the film has never had public exposure and remains banned in India. It opens with a wordless seven minute evocation of the spirit of Sikkim, with a shot of a parallel ropeway with two carriages coming from opposite directions, and two drops of rain moving along a piece of telegraph wire; and closes with a lively view of children, laughing, smoking, and singing; adding up to make the film a song of praise for the place.

The Inner Eye

PRODUCED BY Films Division, Government of India. SCRIPT, COMMENTARY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITOR : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : J.D. Irani, Durgadas Mitra. Duration : 19 min.

Woven around Benodebihari Mukherjee at work on his last large mural in Santiniketan, the film, in its brief, compact span, establishes the artist through a straightforward biographical account of his development, before concentrating on the visionary power of blindness itself : his 'inner eye, an inner vision born of long experience and deep devotion which the artist could call upon to come to his aid and to guide his fingers', as Ray puts it in his commentary. The film closes with a freeze on a profile of the artist's face with his dark glasses, and the following words on the screen : 'Blindness is/a new feeling, a new experience, a new state of being.'

Bala

PRODUCED BY National Centre for the Performing Arts, Bombay and Government of Tamil Nadu. SCRIPT, COMMENTARY AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. EDITOR : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : S.P. Ramanathah, Sujit Sarkar, David. Duration : 33 min.

'A tall girl with long limbs and a round face doing a kind of dance I had never seen before. The year was 1935, and the occasion was the All-Bengal Music Conference. I remember the applause that greeted Balasaraswati's first performance ever of Bharatanatyam—in Calcutta. I was a schoolboy then.

'It didn't take long after her Calcutta performance for Bala to turn into a legendary figure in Indian Classical dancing. When my friend Dr Narayana Menon asked me to make a short film on Balasaraswati, I was delighted. Although I didn't fancy myself as a maker of documentaries, I felt that a film which would preserve the art of someone who was supreme in her field was worth making.

'As we drove to Bala's house, I felt a twinge of regret at having missed her in her prime. I consoled myself with the thought that Bala filmed at fifty-eight was better than Bala not being filmed at all. The regal presence that confronted us as we crossed the threshold of her house took my breath away. Face to face with her, I felt a fresh surge of enthusiasm for the film. I told Bala that the early part of the film would attempt to trace her career with the help of photographs, newspaper clippings and the like. I also wished to include a few glimpses of Bala at home.

'The highpoint of my experience was, of course, the shooting of the musical items. We had decided to include two: a *padam* to display her mime and her singing, and a *varnam* to reveal the full range of her dancing. In filming the *varnam* I had the extraordinary experience of turning into a bemused spectator, wholly at the mercy of the performer, but happy in the thought that what the camera was recording was Bala at her resplendent best.' [Satyajit Ray]

Pikoo

PRODUCED BY Henry Fraise. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON HIS OWN STORY *Pikoo-r Diary*. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Partha Bose, Gobinda Naskar, Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 26 min.

CAST : Arjun Guhathakurta (*Pikoo*), Aparna Sen (*Seema, Pikoo's mother*), Soven Lahiri (*Ranjan, Pikoo's father*), Pramod Ganguly (*Lokenath, Pikoo's grandfather*), Victor Banerjee (*Hitesh, Seema's Lover*), Khairatilal Lahori (*Sadashib, Bearer*).

Six year old Pikoo, left to himself on a school holiday, improvises his own recreations, watching men and things moving along the road beyond the gate, playing with glass balls; dialling telephone numbers at random, drawing flowers with his set of crayons; even as more adult experiences like adultery and death impinge on his lonely world. The film opens with Pikoo's father charging his mother with adultery; moves through Pikoo trying to understand, in conversation with his grandfather, the meaning of 'coronary thrombosis', followed by a strained bit of adulterous lovemaking between his mother and her unsympathetic lover, and closes with Pikoo finding his grandfather dead from a second heart attack, his hand left touching the switch of the calling bell that he had failed to press!

Sadgati
DELIVERANCE

PRODUCED BY Doordarshan. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. BASED ON THE STORY OF THE SAME NAME BY Munshi Premchand. ART DIRECTION : Ashoke Bose. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Soumendu Roy. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITING : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Amulya Das. Duration : 52 min.

CAST : Om Puri (*Dukhi Chamar*), Smita Patil (*Jhuria, Dukhi's Wife*), Mohan Agashe (*Ghasiram*), Richa Mishra (*Dukhi's Daughter*), Gita Siddharth (*Lakshmi, Ghasiram's wife*), Bhaiyalal Hedau (*The Gond*).

This short feature concerns a day in the life of a villager of the untouchable caste Dukhi, who comes to ask the village Brahmin priest Ghasiram to come to his house to fix an auspicious date for his daughter's marriage. The priest agrees but makes Dukhi perform various chores while he has meals, advises people and enjoys his siesta. Weak from a recent fever, Dukhi dies while chopping wood. This causes a crisis because the presence of the corpse prevents the Brahmins from going to the village well as the untouchables refuse

to touch the corpse until the police come. The priest is compelled to commit the distasteful but permissible act of dragging the corpse away with a rope (thereby not polluting himself by direct contact) and dumping it in a refuse heap. He has retained his sanctity and pre-empted public humiliation.

Sadgati is about caste and class.

Sukumar Ray

PRODUCED BY Government of West Bengal. SCRIPT AND DIRECTION : Satyajit Ray. NARRATION : Soumitra Chatterjee. CINEMATOGRAPHY : Barun Raha. MUSIC : Satyajit Ray. EDITOR : Dulal Dutta. SOUND : Sujit Sarkar. Duration : 30 min.

CAST : Soumitra Chatterjee, Utpal Dutt, Santosh Dutta, Tapen Chatterjee, Chiranjib, Bimal Deb, Nirmal Ghosh.

A straightforward biographical work, enlivened by performances of pieces from Sukumar Ray's plays; and a dramatization of an excerpt from Sukumar Ray's masterpiece *Hajabarala*, with the little boy confronting a quarrelsome old, bald man, who insists that he is only thirteen, and a businessman crow; as theatrically conceived by Ray, his filmmaker son; with the fun of the father's drawings and caricatures having the strongest impact.

His Contributions to Films Made by Others

Feature films

SCREENPLAY AND MUSIC

Bāksa Badal (Dir. Nityananda Dutta) 1965
Fatikchānd (Dir. Sandip Ray) 1982
Satyajit Ray Presents (13 Short films made for Doordarshan) 1985-86
Satyajit Ray Presents 2 (3 Short films made for Doordarshan) 1986-87

MUSIC

Shakespearewalla (Dir. James Ivory) 1965
Goopy Bagha Phiray Elo (Dir. Sandip Ray) 1992

Documentaries

SCREENPLAY

The Story of Tata Steel (Made on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Tata Iron and Steel Company). Dir. Harisadhan Dasgupta. 1961
Our Children will know Each Other Better. (Made for Dunlop Ltd.). Dir. Harisadhan Dasgupta. 1960
The Brave Do not Die. (Prod. Government of West Bengal.) Dir. Harisadhan Dasgupta. 1978

MUSIC

Glimpses of West Bengal. Dir. Bansi Chandragupta. 1967
Darjeeling : Himalayan Fantasy. Dir. Bansi Chandragupta. Prod. Graphic Documentaries. 1974
Gangasagar Mela. Dir. Bansi Chandragupta. 1970
House that Never Dies. Dir. Tony Meyer. 1969

COMMENTARY

Tidal Bore. Dir. Vijaya Mulay.
Max Mueller. Dir. Jörn Thiel. 1973

Advertisement Films

SCREENPLAY

A Perfect Day (Made for National Tobacco Co.) Dir. Harisadhan Dasgupta. 1948

MUSIC

Quest for Health (Made for Sandoz Ltd.) Dir. Harisadhan Dasgupta. 1967

TELEFILMS PRESENTED BY RAY

SATYAJIT RAY PRESENTS : SERIES ONE, 1985-86 (in Hindi). Directed by SANDIP RAY

Sanki (from Ray's *Bātik–Babu*), *Smritibhram* (from Ray's *Bipin-Babur Smritibhram*), *Bhakt* (from Ray's *Bhakta*), *Sanshoy* (from Ray's *Sadhan-Babur Sandeha*), *Bhutnath* (from Ray's *Bhuto*), *Studio* (from Ray's *Gagan Chaudhury-r Studio*), *Class Friend* (from Ray's *Class Friend*), *Jodi* (from Ray's *Juti*), *Halki Bārish* (Original screenplay by Ray), *Abhinetree* (from *Abhinetree* by Narendranath Mitra), *Sukhant* (from a story by Parashuram), *Premee* (from *Premee* by Sunil Gangopadhyay), *Kalākriti* (from 'A Work of Art' by Anton Chekhov).

SATYAJIT RAY PRESENTS : SERIES TWO, 1986-87 (in Hindi). Directed by SANDIP RAY

Bandhu (from Ray's *Banku-Babur Bandhu,* in two episodes), *Shodh* (from Ray's *Mayurkanthi Jelly*, in three episodes), *Kissā Kathmandumay* (from Ray's *Jato Kāndo Kathmandutey*, in eight episodes).

FILMS AND TV DOCUMENTARIES ON RAY

1 *Creative Artists of India : Satyajit Ray* (1963).
PROD. : Films Division, Government of India. DIR. : B.D. Garga.

2 *Creative Persons : Satyajit Ray* (1968).
PROD. : W-NET Educational TV, DIR. : James Beveridge.

3 *Late Night Line-up* (1969).
PROD. : BBC Television. Interview with Satyajit Ray in London at the time of *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne.*

4 *South Bank Show : Satyajit Ray* (1978).
Directed by Melvyn Bragg for London Weekend Television. Interview with Ray in London at the time of *Shatranj ke Khilāḍi.*

5 *The Music of Satyajit Ray* (1983).
PROD. : N.F.D.C. DIR. Utpalendu Chakravarti.

6 *Satyajit Ray : Portrait of a Director* (1984).
PROD. : Central Television. DIR. : Zia Mohyeddin. Interview with Ray in London recorded in 1982.

7 *Satyajit Ray* (1984).
PROD. : Films Division, Government of India. DIR. : Shyam Benegal.

8 *Omnibus : The Cinema of Satyajit Ray* (1988).
PROD. : BBC Television. DIR. : Adam Low.

9 *Satyajit Ray* (1989).
PROD. : Paris Television. DIR. : Pierre André.

10 *Movie Master Class* (1991).
DIR. : Mamun Hassan.
An analysis of *Apur Sansar.* First shown on 8 May 1991 on Channel 4.

11 *Introspections : Satyajit Ray* (1991).
PROD. AND DIR. : K. Bikram Singh.

12 *Satyajit Ray* (1992).
PROD. : HTV (India). Interview with Ray by Sharmila Tagore. Shown on Doordarshan, India, on 24 January 1992.

13 *Satyajit Ray*
PROD. : Calcutta TV Centre. Interview with Ray by Samik Bandyopadhyay. Produced in 1976. This interview was first telecast from the Calcutta Centre 1976 and later on National Network (Great Master) on 17 March 1992. Originally directed by Bibhas Chakrabarty, it was revised for the later telecast by Abhijit Dasgupta, who incorporated an excerpt from another interview by Bandyopadhyay, telecast as an introduction to the first national network telecast of *Sadgati* in 1981, and a new short interview with Soumitra Chatterjee.

VIDEOGRAPHY

INDIA

1	*Pather Pānchāli.*	NFDC Video, Bombay (English subtitles)
2	*Aparājito.*	NFDC Video, Bombay (English subtitles)
3	*Jalsāghar.*	NFDC Video, Bombay (English subtitles)
4	*Apur Sansār.*	NFDC Video, Bombay (English subtitles)
5	*Kānchanjunghā.*	Angel Video, Calcutta (English subtitles)
6	*Abhijān.*	Angel Video, Calcutta
7	*Mahānagar.*	Angel Video, Calcutta (English Subtitles)
8	*Chārulata.*	Angel Video, Calcutta
9	*Kāpurush-O-Mahāpurush.*	Angel Video, Calcutta
10	*Nāyak.*	Angel Video, Calcutta
11	*Seemābaddha.*	Angel Video, Calcutta
12	*Joi Bābā Felunāth.*	Angel Video, Calcutta
13	*Hirak Rājār Deshey.*	WBFDC Video, Calcutta (English subtitles)
14	*Gharey-Bāirey.*	NFDC Video, Bombay (English subtitles)
15	*Ganashatru.*	Sunita Video, Calcutta
16	*Āgantuk.*	NFDC Video, Bombay (English subtitles)
17	*The Inner Eye.*	Films Division Video, Bombay
18	*Satyajit Ray* (by Shyam Benegal).	Films Division Video, Bombay
19	*Goopy Gyne Bāghā Byne.*	Radhika Electronics, Calcutta (English subtitles)
20	*Shākhā-Prashākhā.*	Radhika Electronics, Calcutta

UK

1	*Pather Pānchāli.*	Connoisseur Video (English subtitles)
2	*Aparājito.*	Connoisseur Video (English subtitles)
3	*Apur Sansār.*	Connoisseur Video (English subtitles)
4	*Shatranj ke Khilāḍi.*	Art House Original Video (English subtitles)
5	*Ganashatru.*	Connoisseur Video (English subtitles)

USA

1	*Pather Pānchāli.*	Hollywood Select Video (English subtitles)
2	*Aparājito.*	Hollywood Select Video (English subtitles)
3	*Apur Sansār.*	Hollywood Select Video (English subtitles)
4	*Devi.*	Hollywood Select Video (English subtitles)
5	*Teen Kanyā.*	Details not known
6	*Pratidwandi.*	Details not known
7	*Ashani Sanket.*	Details not known
8	*Gharey-Bāirey.*	Details not known
9	*Āgantuk.*	Details not known

FRANCE

1	*Pather Pānchāli.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
2	*Aparājito.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
3	*Jalsāghar.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
4	*Apur Sansār.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
5	*Devi.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
6	*Teen Kanyā.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
7	*Shatranj ke Khilāḍi.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)
8	*Ashani Sanket.*	Les Films de ma vie (French subtitles)

DISCOGRAPHY

1 *Pather Pānchāli* (Song of the Little Road)
MUSIC : Ravi Shankar
A. Improvisations and Theme (LP 33⅓)
World Pacific : WP 1416 (USA) 1961
World Pacific : HMV, EALP 1288 (India) 1964
B. Improvisations and Theme (Cassette)
World Pacific : HMV STC 04B 7156
(India) 1990

2 Ravi Shankar : Music from Satyajit Ray's *Apu Trilogy*
(LP 33⅓) EMI ECPL 3411 (India) 1978

3 *Jalsāghar* (The Music Room)
MUSIC : Vilayat Khan
Le Salon De Musique
Ocora, Radio France 1989
LP (33⅓) — 559022, HM 57
Cassette : 4 55 9022, HM 52
CD : C 559022, HM 83
Contains dialogue, music and songs.

4 *Bāksa Badal* (Dir. Nityananda Dutta)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
Āmār parāna jāhā chāy
Morā jaley sthaley — written and
composed by Rabindranath Tagore
SINGERS : Ruma Guha Thakurta and others
Megaphone JNG 6191 (78 RPM) 1965

5 *Teen Kanyā* (Three Daughters)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
Song from *Monihārā*
(Bājey karuno surey : written and
composed by Rabindranath Tagore)

6 *Bāksa Badal* (Dir. Nityananda Dutta)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
Pathahārā tumi pathik — written and
composed by Rabindranath Tagore
SINGER : Ruma Guha Thakurta.
Megaphone JNG 6192 (78 RPM) 1965

7 *Devi* (The Goddess)
MUSIC : Ali Akbar Khan
Ebār toray chinechhi mā
Written by Satyajit Ray (first song composed
by Ray)
SINGER : Prithwis Mukhopadhyay
Chidiākhānā (The Menagerie)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
Bhālobāsār tumi ki jāno
SINGER : Nomita Ghosal
HMV N 77109 (78 RPM) 1967

8 *Goopy Gyne*
Bāghā Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)
MUSIC AND
LYRICS : Satyajit Ray
Bhuter rājā dilo bor
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
O montri moshāi
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Dakhoray nayon melay
SINGER : Anup Ghosal
Angel Records/EMI 45-AE4001
(45 RPM Standard Play) 1969

9 *Goopy Gyne*
Bāghā Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)
Maharājā, tomāray selām
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Oray Bāghā rey
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Angel Records/EMI 45-AE4002
(45 RPM Standard Play) 1969

10 *Goopy Gyne*
Bāghā Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)
Oray bābā dakho cheye
SINGER : Anup Ghosal
Ak je chhilo rājā
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Angel Records/EMI45-AE4003
(45 RPM Standard Play) 1969

11 *Goopy Gyne*
Bāghā Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)
Mahārājā, tomāray selām
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Oray Bāghā rey
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Oray bābā dakho cheye
SINGER : Anup Ghosal
Ak je chhilo rājā
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh
Angel Records/EMI TAE 4029
(45 RPM Extended Play) 1969

12 *Goopy Gyne*
Bāghā Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha)
SIDE ONE : Title Music, Goopy Theme, Dance of the Ghosts, King of the Ghosts gives 3 boons, *Dakho ray nayon melay, Bhuter rājā dilo bor,* Goopy and Bagha land on snow, The Flutist in the Shundi Fair, *Mahārājā, tomaray selām.*
SIDE TWO : Goopy and Bagha in their palace room, Entry of the Hallah King, *Oray Bāghā ray,* The Prisoners, *O Montrimoshāi,* Borfi Theme, Search for and Capture of Goopy and Bagha, *Ak Je Chhilo Rājā, Hallāh cholechhay juddhay,* Camel March, *Oray bābā dakho cheye,* Goopy and Bagha approve of the Princesses.
REGAL EMI ELRZ-46 (LP 33) 1970.

13 *Shakespearewallah*
DIRECTOR : James Ivory
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
Epic Records Footlight Series
(LP 33⅓) 1966
Stereo/FLS15110, Mono/FLM 13110 (USA)
Columbia Records, Mono 33 EIX 5013 (India)

13 *The Wandering Company*
DIRECTOR : Ivory Merchant
Twenty-fifth Anniversary, 1987
(Contains a double album, a double cassette and a Compact Disc.)
2 Cassettes — HMV, India.
Vol. 1 STCS 04F 7298
Vol. 2 STCS 04F 7299
Vol. 2 side A contains 5 tracks from *Shakespearewallah.*

15 *Shatranj ke Khilādi* (The Chess Players)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
EMI S/45 NLP 1006 (45 RPM LP) 1977
Contains songs by Birju Maharaj, Reba Muhuri, Calcutta Youth Choir and Amjad Khan.

16 *Joi Bābā Felunāth* (The Elephant God)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
EMI 7EPE 503 (45 RPM Extended Play) 1979
Contains two traditional Bhajans sung by Reba Muhuri.

17 *Hirak Rājār Deshey* (The Kingdom of Diamonds)
MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
EMI-S/7EPE 5130 (45 RPM Extended Play) 1981
SIDE ONE : *Ār bilamba noi, Eshe Hirak Deshey, Dujon bhāirābhāi*
SIDE TWO : *Drishya dekhi anya, Dhoronāko Sāntrimoshāi, Pāye podi Bāghāmāmā*
LYRICS : Satyajit Ray
SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh

18 *Hirak Rājār Deshey* (The Kingdom of Diamonds)
EMI ECSD 3418 (LP 33⅓) 1980

SIDE ONE : *Morā dujonāi rājār jāmāi,* Growing Old, *Ār bilamba noi,* Father-in-law Agrees, King Hirak Arrives, Ministers get necklaces, The Professor, The Brain-Washing Machine, *Kotoi rongo dekhi duniāi,* The Reciting of Mantras, Udayan advises his students, The Burning of Books, *Āhā ki Ānanda.*

SIDE TWO : *Sāgoray dekho cheye, Drishya dekhi anya, Dekho gorbito beer,* The Poor are driven away, The Procession of kings, Rings for the kings, *Eshe Hirak Deshey,* The Hunt for Udayan, *Dhoronā ko Sāntrimoshāi, Pāye poḍi Bāghāmāmā,* Jantar-Mantar, *Nohi Jantra, Dujon bhāirābhāi.*

LYRICS : Satyajit Ray

SINGERS : Anup Ghosal, Robi Ghosh and Amar Pal

19 *Goopy Gyne Bāghā Byne/Hirak Rajar Deshey.*

MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
EMI ODEON 4 Two 22806 (Cassette) 1982
Contains selected songs.

20 *Gharey-Bāirey* (The Home and the World)
EMI PSLP 1505 (LP 33⅓) 1985
EMI 4 TCS 02F 2575 (Cassette) 1985
Contains dialogues, music and songs.

21 *Music of Satyajit Ray* (1991)
Double Album : HMV, Pmlp/36
Double Cassette : HMV, STHV 24647/48

SIDE ONE : *Teen Kanyā, Kānchanjunghā, Abhijān, Chārulatā*

SIDE TWO : *Chārulatā, Bāksa-Badal, Nāyak, Shakespearewallah, Goopy Gyne Bāghā Byne, Ashani Sanket*

SIDE THREE : *Sonār Kellā, Joi Bābā Felunāth, Hirak Rājār Deshey, Pikoo, Gharey-Bāirey*

SIDE FOUR : *Ganashatru, Shākhā-Prashākhā, Goopy Bāghā Phiray Elo, Āgantuk*

CD PMLP 5448 (EMI)
Some tracks from *Teen Kanyā, Kānchanjunghā, Chārulatā, Bāksa-Badal, Joi Bābā Felunāth, Ganashatru, Goopy Bāghā Phiray Elo* were omitted from timing constraints. Total deletion of *Shākhā-Prashākhā* from copyright problems.

22 *Goopy Bāghā Phiray Elo* (Dir. Sandip Ray)

MUSIC : Satyajit Ray
HMV Stereo (1991) LP-PSLP 1746
Cassette –

SIDE ONE : *Katakāl parey, Addiney duijaney,* Anandapur Rājsabhā, Jādur bāji, Poshāk badal, *Sudhijaney jata āchho,* Anandagarh Kella, Goopy-Bāghār purono kathā, Bānsbon, Sammohan kakshey prabesh, Sammohan, *Michhāmichhi karo keno chintā,* Sammohito Chheler Dal.

SIDE TWO : *Kamon bānshi bājāy shono,* Ghumanto chhelerā, Pradiper Hatashā, *Āj thekey morā,* Pradip o Sainyer Dal, Asahāi bāpera, *Sab kāj bandho,* Brahmānandar ateet, *Morā āsi dheyey dheyey, Oi je dakho,* Kellar Pathey Bikram, Dhanratna Udhāo, Bikramer Prabesh, *Orey Shoitan!, Ājkey moder ārām bado.*

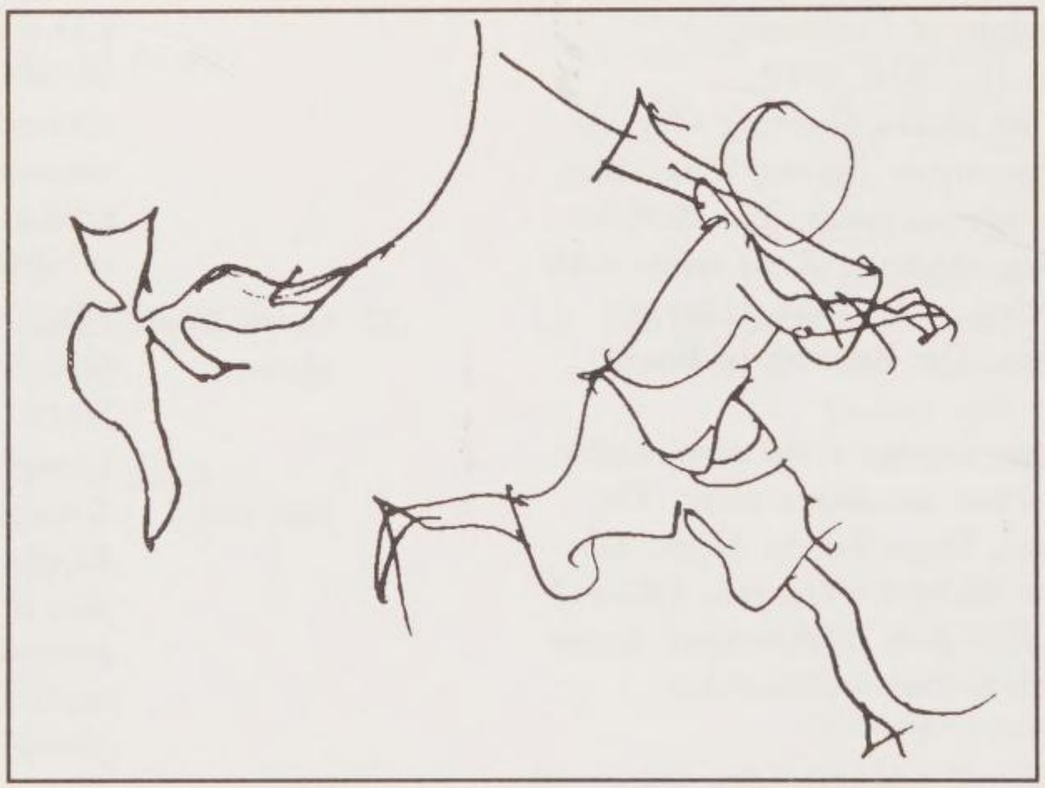
23 *The Masterworks of Satyajit Ray*
Cassette 4DQ 7243 5 554934 1
Produced by Merchant-Ivory Productions, in association with Sony Pictures Classics, USA.

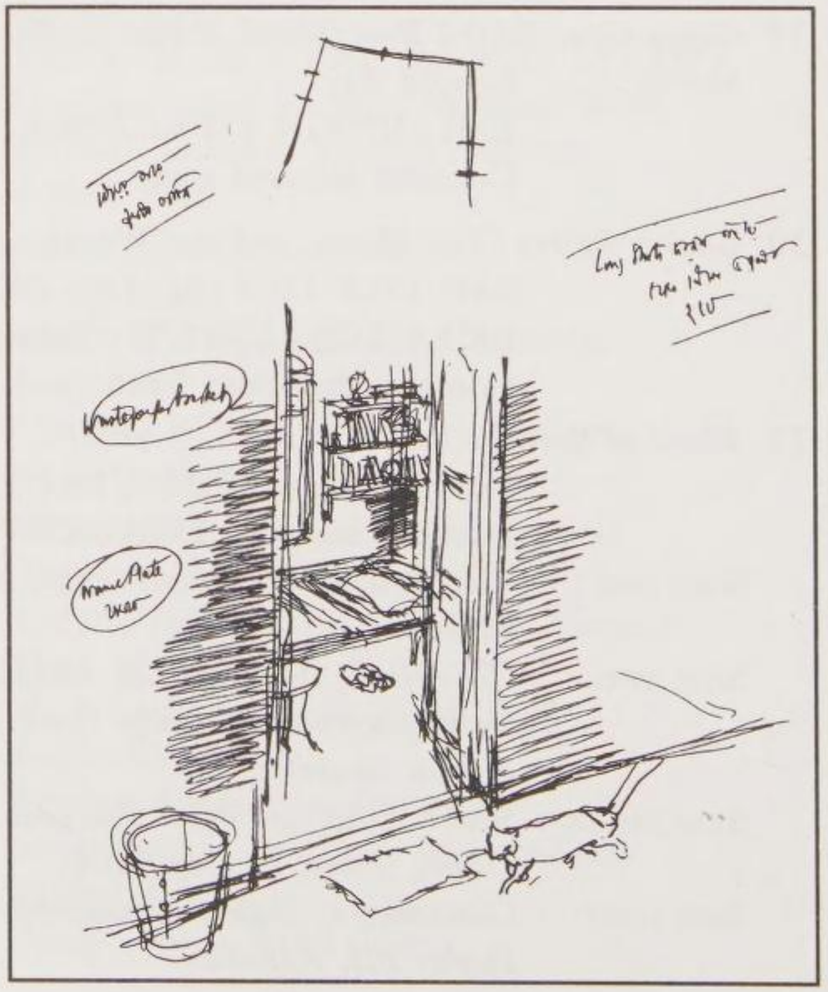
SIDE ONE : 1 *Pather Pānchāli* 2 *Apur Sansār* 3 *Aparājito* 4 *Devi* 5 *Teen Kanyā* 6 *Chārulatā*

SIDE TWO : 1 *Mahānagar* 2 *Jalsāghar*

24 *The Masterworks of Satyajit Ray*
CD Stereo CDQ 7243 5 55493 27
Produced by Merchant-Ivory Productions in association with Sony Pictures Classics, USA.
Pather Pānchāli, Apur Sansār, Aparājito, Devi, Teen Kanyā, Chārulatā, Mahānagar, Jalsāghar.

Sketches from
his filmscripts for
The Apu Trilogy





SATYAJIT RAY
reception/recognition

The first public ovation

‘পথের পাঁচালী’ চিত্ররূপের জন-সম্বর্ধনা

সিনেট হল। তেইশে সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯৫৫

‘পথের পাঁচালী’ চিত্রের কৃতী পরিচালক, শিল্পী ও কলাকুশলীদের প্রতি বাংলার তরুণ সাহিত্যিকদের অভিনন্দন।

হে রূপকার,

বাংলাদেশকে চলচ্চিত্রে রূপ দিয়েছ বলে তোমাদের শ্রদ্ধানত অভিনন্দন জানাই।
জন্মভূমি বাংলার শ্যামল মাটিকে আমরা হারিয়ে ফেলেছি পুঁথির অক্ষরে। জন্মভূমির মানুষের ব্যথাকে আমরা শুধু অনুভব করি বক্তৃতার আবেগে। এই ক্লান্ত-কল্পনার দুয়ার খুলে আমাদের চোখের, মনের অন্দরমহলে তোমরা হঠাৎ এনে দিয়েছ বাতাসে উত্তাল একরাশ কাশফুলের হাসি, গুলঞ্চলতার দুলুনি, আর ভিজে মাটির সোঁদা গন্ধ।

হে শিল্পী,

বাংলাদেশের মানুষকে চলচ্চিত্রে প্রাণ দিয়েছ বলে তোমাদের কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাই। যে দুঃস্থ হরিহর কবি থেকে কেরানী হল বাঁচার তাড়নায়, যে সর্বজয়া আঁচলের আড়ালে ‘সুখে থেকো’ বাসন বিক্রী করতে গিয়ে সুখে থাকার বাসনাকে বিকিয়ে দিয়ে আসে, যে অপু মৃত্যু আর কান্নার ওপর দাঁড়িয়ে থাকে অসম্ভবের স্বপ্নে উজ্জ্বল দুটি ডাগর চোখের চাউনী মেলে, যে দুর্গা ফুল হয়ে ফোটবার আগেই কুঁড়ি হয়ে থেৎলে যায়, যে পিসীমা বাঁচবার জন্যে বারবার ক্ষিপ্ত হয়ে ছুটে বেড়ায় এখানে ওখানে — সেই সব প্রিয় পরিজনের সংগে তোমরা আমাদের পরিচয় করিয়ে দিয়েছ চিরকালের জন্যে।

হে স্রষ্টা,

তোমাদের প্রতিভার পরশমণির ছোঁয়ায় সাহিত্যের কথাশিল্পের গান হয়ে বেজে উঠেছে। কাগজের ছবি জেগে উঠেছে মানুষের প্রাণ নিয়ে। তোমাদের পৌরহিত্যে দেশের মানুষের সংগে হৃদয়ে হৃদয় যোগ হল আমাদের। জানি শুধু শ্রদ্ধার দক্ষিণায় তোমাদের পাওনা মেটানো যাবে না। আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ-এর সমস্ত সাধনা রইল তোমাদের কাছে ঋণী।

হে পরমাত্মীয়,

তোমাদের সম্মিলিত প্রতিভার স্পর্শ আমাদের বারংবার উজ্জীবিত করুক।

Public Felicitation for the film version of

Pather Panchali

THE SENATE HALL, 23 SEPTEMBER 1955

Felicitations offered by the young writers of Bengal to the distinguished director, artistes and technicians of the film *Pather Panchali*.

Maker,

We felicitate you with the deepest reverence for having expressed Bengal itself in terms of cinema. We have lost the green soil of the land of our birth, in the pile of printed types. It is only in the passionate avowals of public speeches that we experience the agonies of the people of the land of our birth. You have flung open the gates that held back our exhausted imagination and flooded the innermost recesses of our being and the core of our perception all on a sudden with the smiles of a heap of *kaash* flowers flushed with the wind, the rocking dance of the *gulancha* creepers, and the warm scent of wet earth.

Artist,

We acknowledge our gratitude to you for having given the people of Bengal a life of their own in cinema. You have brought close to our hearts and for ever a whole band of dearly loved relations — the poor Harihar, poet turned clerk in the struggle for survival; Sarbajaya, who carries an old piece of utensil marked 'Stay happy' out of the house to sell it off along with the desire to stay happy; Apu, who takes his stand against death and tears with his bright, wide open eyes aglow with dreams of the impossible; Durga, trampled to death as a bud even before she can flower into a full life; and the aunt who runs in desperation from place to place in her bid to survive.

Creator,

The magic touch of your genius has turned the narrative of literature into a piece of music. Pictures conceived on paper have assumed human lives. You have presided over a ceremony that has brought the hearts of people closer to one another's. We are aware of the fact that no tributes will be adequate payment for your achievement. All our efforts in the future will owe you an irreparable debt.

Intimate friends,

Let the touch of your collective genius inspire us again and again.

ভেনিস ফিল্ম-ফেষ্টিভ্যালে গোল্ডেন লায়ন অব্ সেন্ট মার্ক প্রাপ্ত
এবং
সিনেমা জগতে পৃথিবীর সর্ব্বোচ্চ সম্মানে সম্মানিত
শ্রীযুক্ত সত্যজিৎ রায়কে

কলিকাতা মহানগরীর পৌর সম্বর্ধনা

হে অনন্যসাধারণ প্রতিভাধর শিল্পী,

পৃথিবীর সমস্ত জাগ্রত জাতি যে-দুর্ল্লভ সম্মান এবং স্বীকৃতি পাবার জন্য উন্মুখ, আজ তুমি ইউরোপের ও আমেরিকার সর্ব্বজনস্বীকৃত শ্রেষ্ঠতম বিচারক-মণ্ডলীর হাত থেকে সেই সর্ব্বশ্রেষ্ঠ সম্মান আহরণ ক'রে নিয়ে এসেছ। তুমি বাংলার গৌরব, তুমি নবভারতের গর্ব্বের বস্তু — তোমাকে নমস্কার!

সারা পৃথিবীর সিনেমা-শিল্প আজ তার বাণীরূপের সন্ধান করছে, সেই সঙ্কট-মুহূর্ত্তে তুমি তোমার প্রতিভাদীপ্ত নৈপুণ্য দিয়ে, তোমার সৃষ্টিমন্ত্রে সঞ্জীবিত অনন্যসাধারণ যে রূপাঙ্কণ পদ্ধতি আবিষ্কার করলে, তার মূল্য এবং মর্য্যাদার স্বীকৃতি লাভ করেছ তুমি। জয়গৌরবধন্য দিগ্বিজয়ী বীরের মত দেশবাসীর অন্তর্লোকে তোমার আসন আজ সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত। তুমি নিজে ধন্য হয়েছ, ধন্য করেছ তোমার মাতৃভূমিকে। জগৎবরেণ্য শিল্পীশ্রেষ্ঠ তুমি আমাদের প্রিয়পাত্র — তোমাকে নমস্কার!

পরাধীন ভারতবর্ষে আত্মপ্রকাশের পথ ছিল অবরুদ্ধ, আজ স্বাধীন ভারতে সে-পথ হয়েছে উন্মুক্ত; সেই অবারিত দ্বারপথে সাহিত্যরসাশ্রিত তোমার শিল্পকীর্ত্তি "অপরাজিত" নিয়ে উপস্থিত হ'লে পশ্চিমের বিচারসভায়। আত্মকেন্দ্রিক পশ্চিম দেখলে, আত্মবিসর্জ্জনের লীলাভূমি অবহেলিত অবজ্ঞাত দরিদ্র ভারতে প্রাণধর্ম্মের ঐশ্বর্য্য। প্রতিযোগিতায় প্রথম স্থান অধিকার করলে তুমি — তোমাকে নমস্কার!

বাংলার সিনেমা-শিল্পের আজ মহা দুর্দ্দিন। দ্বিধাবিভক্ত বাংলায় তার প্রচারক্ষেত্র নিতান্ত সঙ্কুচিত। তার ওপর প্রযোজক, পরিবেশক ও প্রদর্শক — এই তিনের মধ্যে স্বার্থকেন্দ্রিক অসম অর্থবন্টনব্যবস্থা সিনেমা-শিল্পের জীবনীশক্তিকে কণ্ঠাগত ক'রে এনেছে। ব্যবসায়গত সাফল্যের অনিশ্চয়তা, প্রযোজকদের ক'রে তুলেছে সিনেমা-বিমুখ। কিন্তু "বঙ্গদেশ রঙ্গে ভরা"। বাঙ্গালীর মত এমন রঙ্গপ্রিয় নাট্যামোদী জাতি ভারতবর্ষে বিরল। এতটুকু আনন্দের স্বাদ যেখানে পেয়েছে, আনন্দ-সন্ধানী বাঙ্গালী সেখানে ছুটবেই।

বিচার-বিবেচনাহীন আনন্দমদমত্ত জাতির এ বড় শোচনীয় দুরবস্থা।

এই দুর্যোগঘন মুহূর্ত্তে জনকল্যাণব্রতী সার্থক রূপকার তুমি — তোমার শুভাগমন বিধিনির্দ্দিষ্ট বলেই আমাদের দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস। তোমার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি তোমার বিষয়বস্তু নির্ব্বাচন তারই শুভ সূচনা।

পুরুষানুক্রমে অর্জ্জিত বিধিদত্ত প্রতিভার উত্তরাধিকারী তুমি। তোমার হৃদয়ের হিরণ্ময় পাত্রে আছে মৃতসঞ্জীবনী অমৃতধারা। সেই ধারাসিঞ্চনে হতচেতন বাঙ্গালীর আহত আত্মাকে সুস্থ এবং নিরাময় ক'রে তুলবে তুমি — তোমাকে নমস্কার!

তোমার শুভাগমনে আজ এই নগরী গৌরবান্বিত, তোমার সম্মানিত সম্বর্দ্ধনায় সারা ভারত আজ পুলকিত, তুমি আমাদের পরমাত্মীয় — তোমাকে নমস্কার!

তোমার যাত্রাপথ হোক কুসুমাস্তীর্ণ!

তোমার জীবনযাত্রার প্রতিটি দিবস হোক্ নির্ব্বিঘ্ন!

তোমার সর্ব্বাঙ্গীণ মঙ্গল কামনাই হোক্ আজ আমাদের একমাত্র প্রার্থনা!

তুমি শতায়ু হও! তুমি জয়যুক্ত হও!

বন্দে মাতরম্

শ্রদ্ধাবনত —
কলিকাতা নাগরিকগণের ও
কলিকাতা পৌর-প্রতিষ্ঠানের পক্ষে
শ্রী ত্রিগুণা সেন
মেয়র

Civic Reception accorded by the City of Calcutta

to Satyajit Ray

on being honoured with the world's greatest honour in cinema,
The Golden Lion of St. Mark at the Venice Film Festival

O exceptional genius and artist,

You have returned with the greatest and rarest honour and recognition that all the progressive nations of the world yearn for, from the greatest jurors in the field from Europe and America. You have brought glory to Bengal, an object of pride for the new India. Our salutations to you!

At a time when the art of cinema the world over is busy seeking its form and language, you have discovered an exceptional style through your skill touched with genius and the magic of your creativity, bringing you recognition and prestige at a critical juncture. In the hearts of your people you are enthroned today as a world conqueror in all his glory. You have proved yourself worthy, and made your native land worthy too. O artist revered by the world, you are our favourite. Our salutations to you!

The way to self-expression lay encumbered with obstacles in colonial India. The way lies open in independent India today. You took your *Aparajito*, a work of art rich with a literary flavour, along that newly opened way to the seat of judgment of the West. A West, absorbed in itself, discovered the wealth of life that an India, glorying in its spirit of sacrifice, nurtures in the midst of the neglect and humiliation that it has had to endure. You have won the first place in the competition. Our salutations to you!

The Bengali film industry is in a state of crisis today. In a Bengal split into two, its area of appreciation has been constricted. An unequal division of finance between the producer, the distributor and the exhibitor, each fighting for his own interests, has imperilled the life of the industry. The uncertainties of commercial success are driving producers away from cinema. But 'the land of Bengal remains thirsting for recreation.' There are few races in India as appreciative of performance and craving for recreation as the Bengalis. The Bengali, looking for joy, will run to wherever he/she has tasted the least of joy.

A race, revelling in joy, without judgment or discrimination, is in a pitiable state.

We are convinced that your happy appearance at this moment of crisis as a great artist dedicated to human welfare was ordained by Fate. Your attitude and your selection of theme spell a beneficent beginning.

You have inherited the genius that your ancestors had been endowed with by Fate. In the gold vessel of your heart you bear the elixir of life. You will shower the wounded soul of the Bengali who has lost his sensibility with the elixir to cure him and restore him to health. Our salutations to you!

This city is honoured by your arrival. The whole of India is thrilled at the reception being accorded to you. You are a close kinsman of ours. Our salutations to you!

Let the course of your journey be covered with flowers.

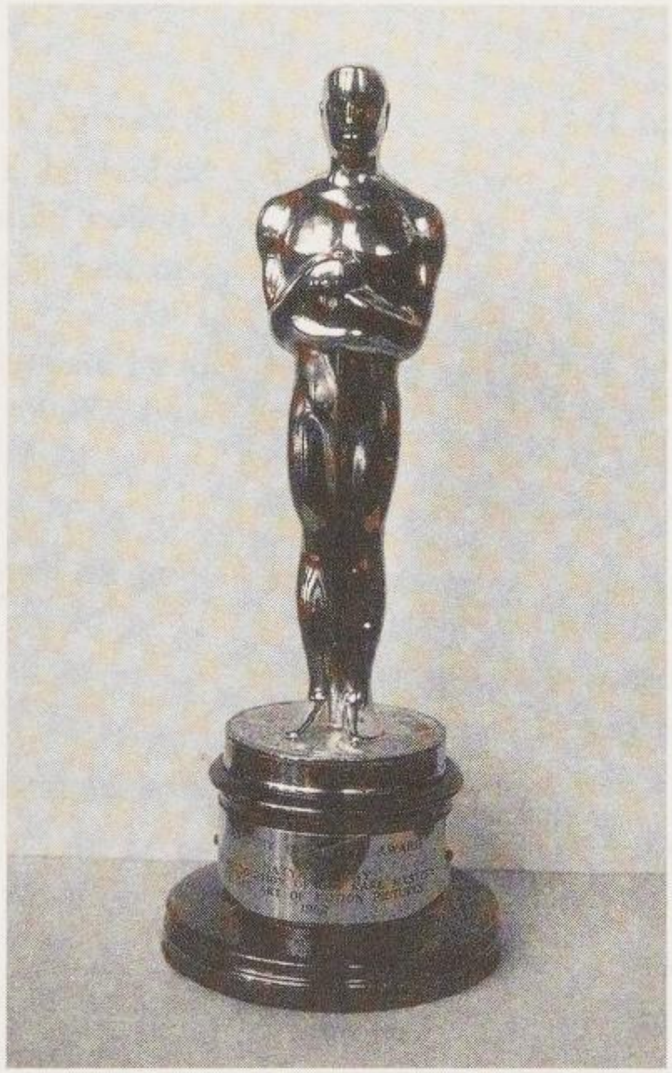
Let every day of your life be unencumbered.

The only prayer we would offer on this occasion would be one for your success in all aspects of life.

May you live for a hundred years. Be victorious.

Bande Mataram.

Respectfully
SRI TRIGUNA SEN,
Mayor
on behalf of the Citizens of Calcutta and the Corporation of Calcutta



64TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS 1992

An Academy Honorary Award is Presented to Satyajit Ray

"In recognition of his rare mastery of the art of motion pictures, and of his profound humanitarian outlook, which has had an indelible influence on filmmakers and audiences throughout the world."

AWARDS

Pather Panchali
Song of the Little Road

1 President's Gold and Silver Medals, New Delhi 1955.
2 'Best Human Document', Cannes 1956.
3 Diploma of Merit, Edinburgh 1956.
4 Vatican Award, Rome 1956.
5 Golden Carbao, Manila 1956.
6 Best Film and Best Director, San Francisco 1957.
7 Selznick Golden Laurel, Berlin 1957.
8 Critics' Award: Best Film of the Year, Stratford (Canada) 1958.
9 Best Film, Vancouver 1958.
10 Cultural Award: Best Foreign Film (1959), New York 1959.
11 Kinema Jumpo Award: Best Foreign Film, Tokyo 1966.
12 Bodil Award: Best Non-European Film of the Year, Denmark 1966.

Aparajito
The Unvanquished

1 Golden Lion of St. Mark, Venice 1957.
2 Cinema Nuovo Award, Venice 1957.
3 Critics' Award, Venice 1957.
4 Best Film and Best Direction, San Francisco 1958.
5 International Critics' Award, San Francisco, 1958.
6 Golden Laurel: Best Foreign Film, USA 1958-59.
7 Selznick Golden Laurel, Berlin 1960.
8 Bodil Award: Best Non-European Film of the Year, Denmark 1967.

Jalsaghar
The Music Room

1 President's Silver Medal, New Delhi 1959.
2 Award for Best Music, Moscow 1959.

Apur Sansar
The World of Apu

1 President's Gold Medal, New Delhi 1959.
2 Sutherland Trophy for Best Original and Imaginative Film, London Film Festival, 1960.
3 Diploma of Merit, XIV International Film Festival, Edinburgh 1960.
4 Best Foreign Film, National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, USA 1960.

Apu Trilogy

1 Wington Award for each film, London Film Festival, 1980.

Devi
The Goddess

1 President's Gold Medal, New Delhi 1961.

Teen Kanya
Three Daughters

1 President's Silver Medal (for *Samāpti*), New Delhi 1961.
2 Golden Boomerang, Melbourne (*Samāpti* and *The Postmaster*), 1962.
3 Selznick Golden Laurel, Berlin 1963.

Rabindranath Tagore

1 Prime Minister's Gold Medal, New Delhi 1961.
2 Golden Seal, Locarno 1961.
3 Special Mention, Montevideo 1962.

Abhijan
The Expedition

1 President's Silver Medal, New Delhi 1962.

Mahanagar
The Big City

1 Certificate of Merit, New Delhi 1963.
2 Silver Bear for Best Direction, Berlin 1964.

Charulata
The Lonely Wife

1 President's Gold Medal, New Delhi 1964.
2 Silver Bear for Best Direction, Berlin 1965.
3 Catholic Award, Berlin 1965.
4 Best Film, Acapulco 1965.

Nayak
The Hero

1 Special Jury Award, Berlin 1966.
2 Unicrit Award, Berlin 1966.
3 Award for Best Direction, New Delhi 1966.

Chiḍiakhana
The Menagerie

1 Award for Best Direction, Government of West Bengal, 1968.

Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne
The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha

1 President's Gold and Silver Medals, New Delhi 1968.
2 Award for Best Direction, New Delhi 1968.
3 Silver Cross, Adelaide 1969.
4 Best Director, Auckland 1969.
5 Merit Award, Tokyo 1970.
6 Best Film, Melbourne 1970.

Pratidwandi
The Adversary

1 President's Silver Medal, New Delhi 1971.
2 Special Award (Best Director), New Delhi 1971.

Seemabaddha
Company Limited

1 President's Gold Medal, New Delhi 1972.
2 FIPRESCI Award, Venice 1972.

The Inner Eye

1 Prime Minister's Gold Medal, New Delhi 1974.

Ashani Sanket
Distant Thunder

1 President's Gold Medal for Music Direction, New Delhi 1973.
2 Best Regional Film, New Delhi 1973.
3 Golden Bear, Berlin 1974.
4 Golden Hugo, Chicago 1974.

Sonar Kella
The Golden Fortress

1 Government of West Bengal Award for Best Film, Best Director, 1974.
2 President's Silver Medal, New Delhi 1974.
3 Best Colour Photography, Best Director, Best Screenplay, New Delhi 1974.
4 Golden Statue for the 'Best Live Feature Film', Tenth Teheran International Festival of Films for Children and Young Adults, 1975.

Jana Aranya
The Middle Man

1 Best Direction, New Delhi 1975.
2 Government of West Bengal Award for Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, 1975.
3 Special Award, Karlovy Vary 1976.

Shatranj ke Khiladi
The Chess Players

1 Best Feature Film in Hindi, New Delhi 1977.
2 Best Colour Photography, New Delhi 1977.

Joi Baba Felunath
The Elephant God

1 Best Children's Film, New Delhi 1978.
2 Best Film, Hong Kong 1979.

Hirak Rajar Deshey
The Kingdom of Diamonds

1 Best Music Director, New Delhi 1980.
2 Best Lyrics, New Delhi 1980.
3 Special Award, Cyprus 1984.

Sadgati
Deliverance

Special Jury Award, New Delhi 1981.

Gharey–Bairey
The Home and the World

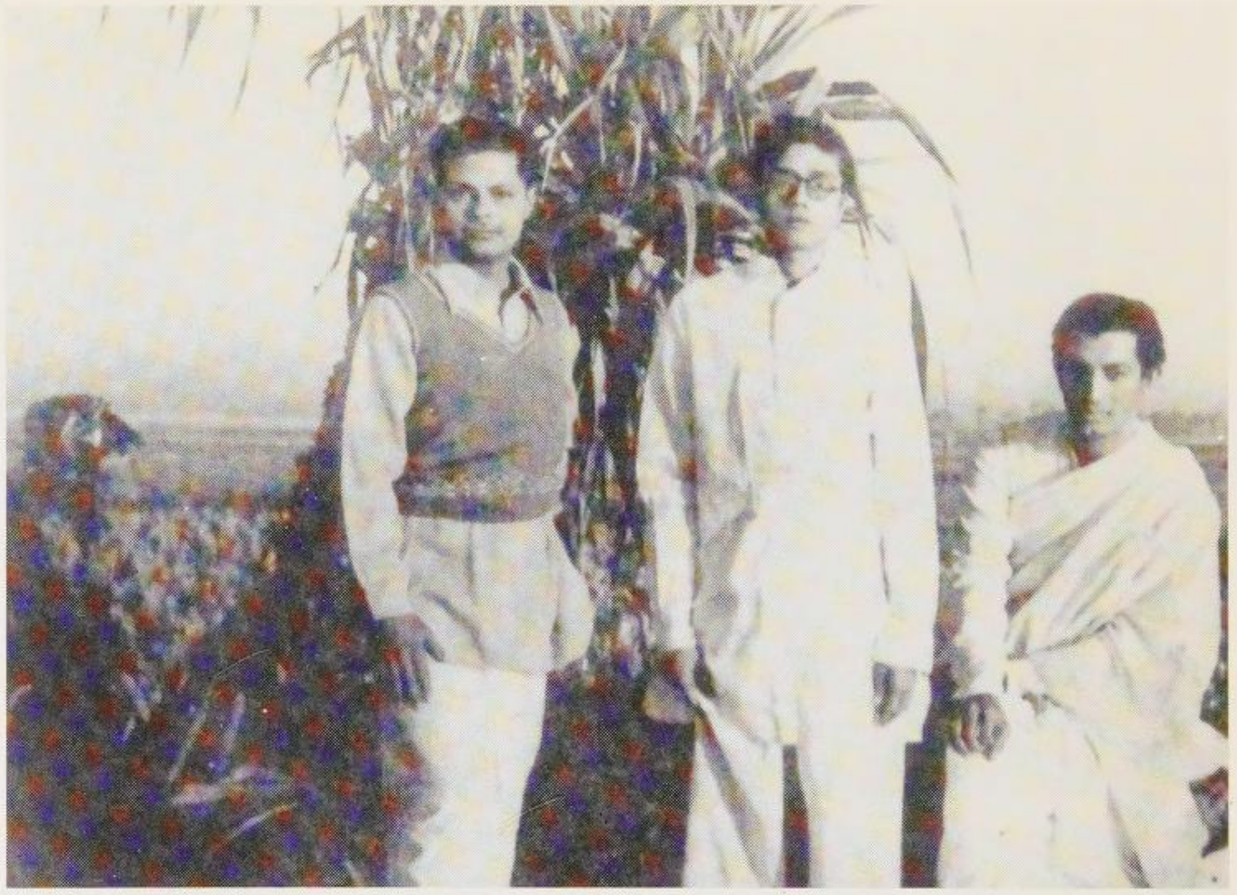
1 Best Bengali Film, New Delhi 1984.
2 Best Costume Design, New Delhi 1984.

Ganashatru
An Enemy of the People

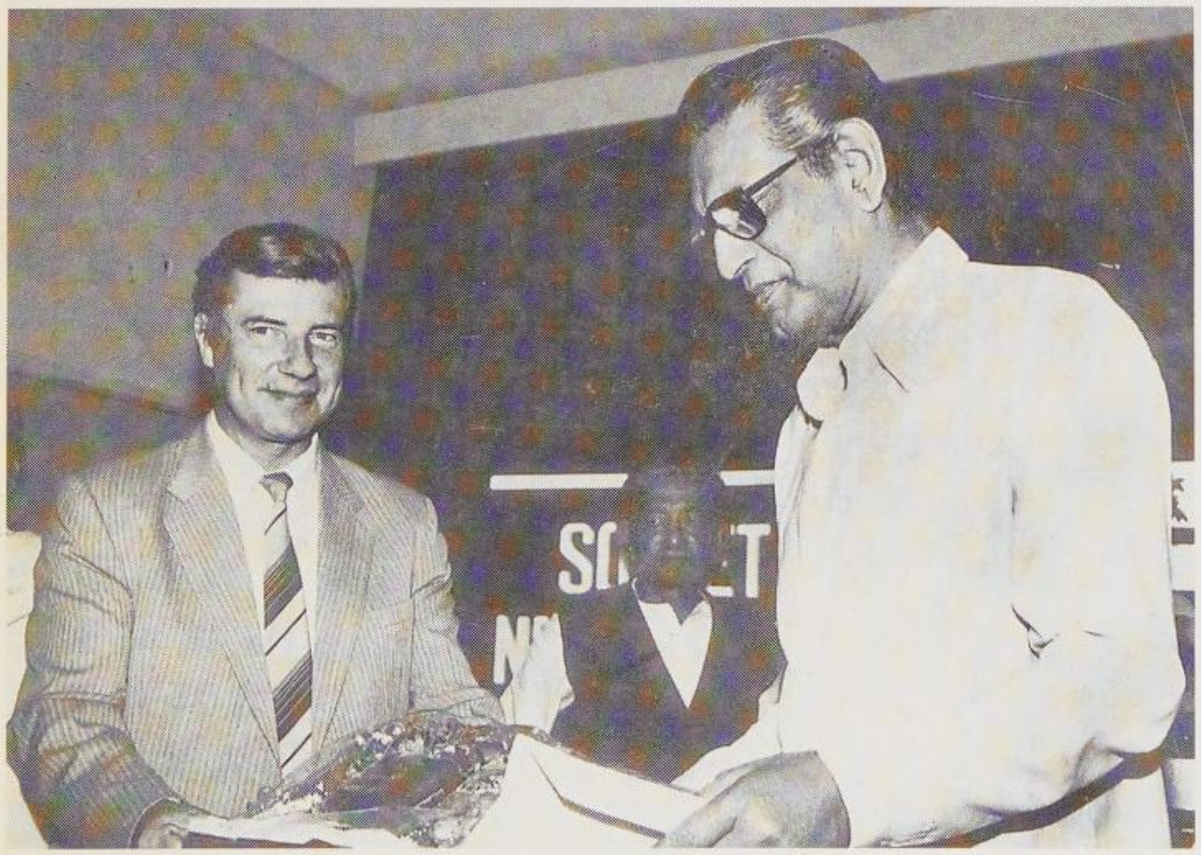
Best Bengali Film, New Delhi 1989.

Agantuk
The Stranger

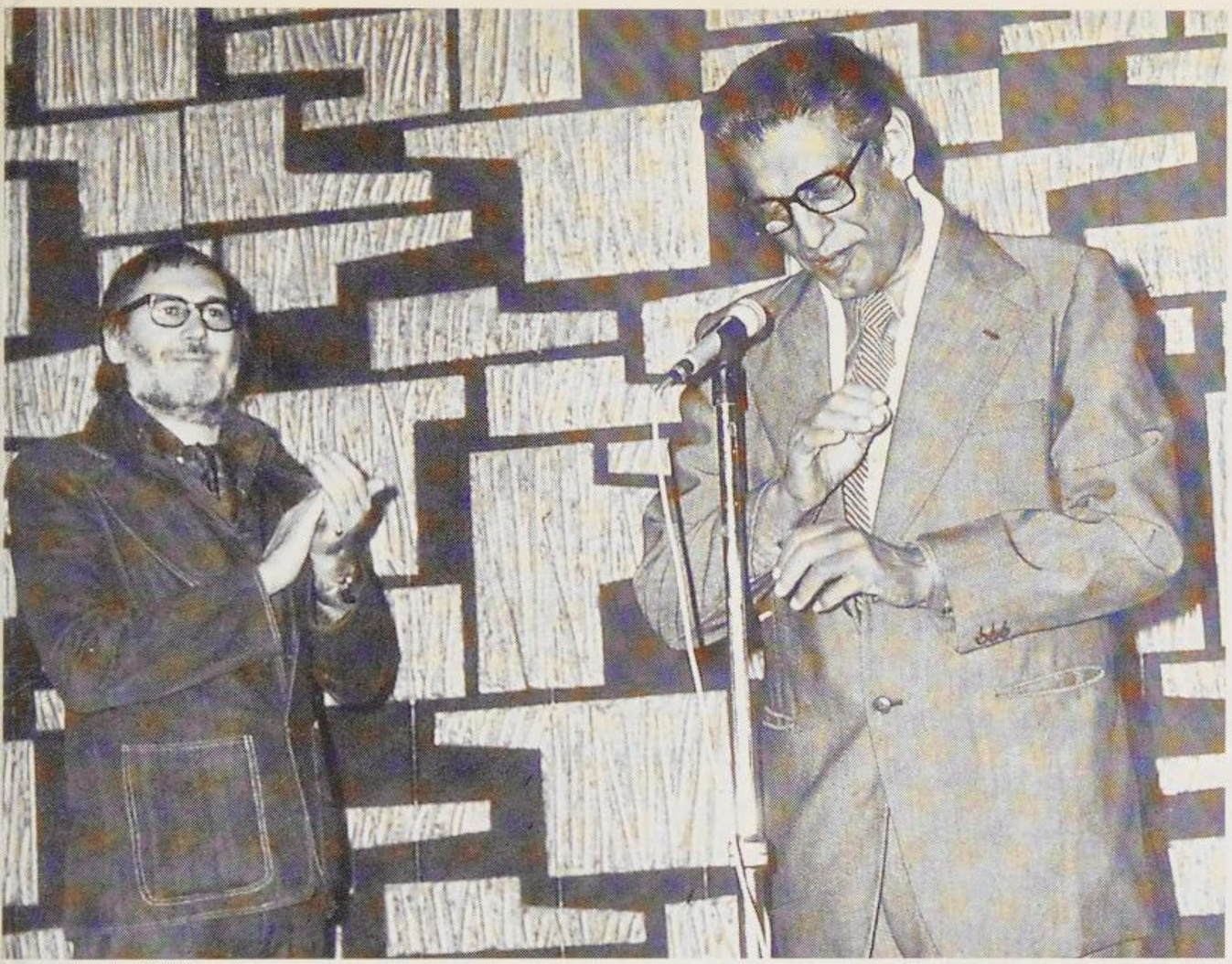
1 FIPRESCI Award, Venice 1991.
2 Best Film, New Delhi 1991.
3 Best Director, New Delhi 1991.

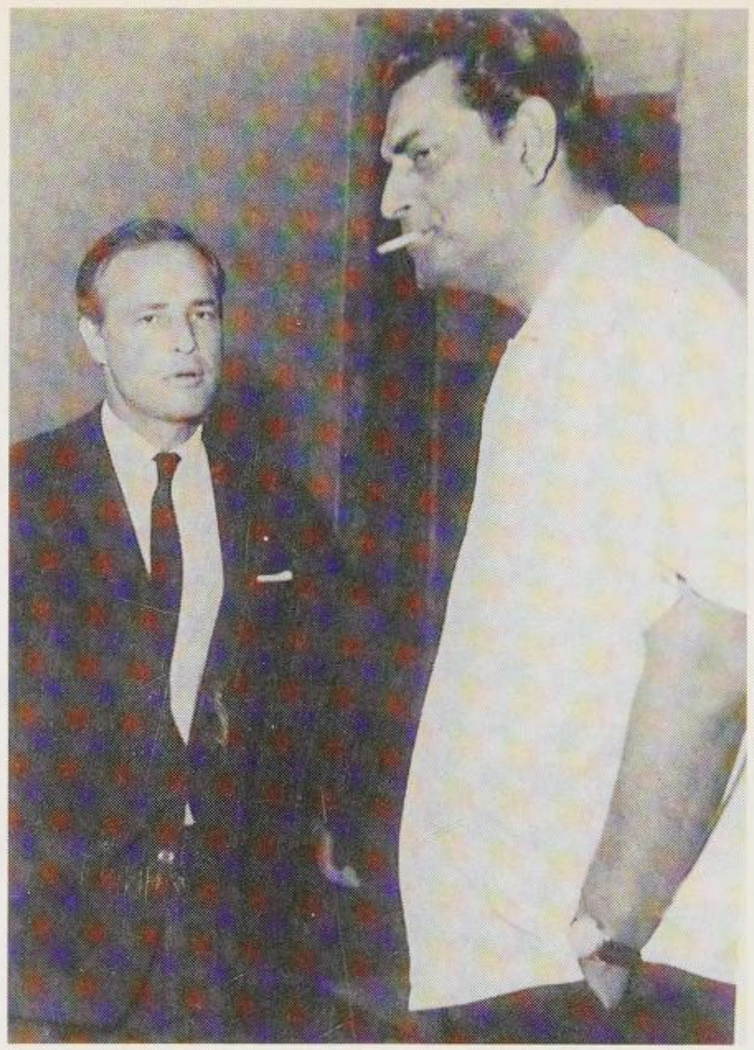


Top Left. With his Kala Bhavan classmates Kulkarni, Neogy and Kowshik, 1941. (Photograph : M. Muthuswamy. Courtesy : Dinkar Kowshik). Top Right. With O.C. Gangoly and I.B. Dasgupta, colleagues at D.J. Keymer. Courtesy : Amal Ghosh. Bottom Left. With Bijaya, Norman Clare and Clare's mother, in London 1950. Bottom Right. At the airport, with his wife and son, and his mother with a bouquet, and members of the Lake Palli Manimela on his return from Venice with the Golden Lion of St. Mark. 1957. Courtesy : Ray family.



Top Left. With Dr. Alfred Bauer, at the Berlin Film Festival, 1964, along with Anil Chatterjee and R. D. Bansal, lead actor and producer respectively of *Mahanagar*. Top Right. With James Quinn, at the London Festival, 1977. Bottom Left. Receives the Soviet Land Nehru Award from E. P. Ivanov, Consul General of the USSR in Calcutta. Bottom Right. With Thorald Dickinson, Mrs Kawakita and other members of the Jury at the Teheran Festival. Courtesy : Ray family.



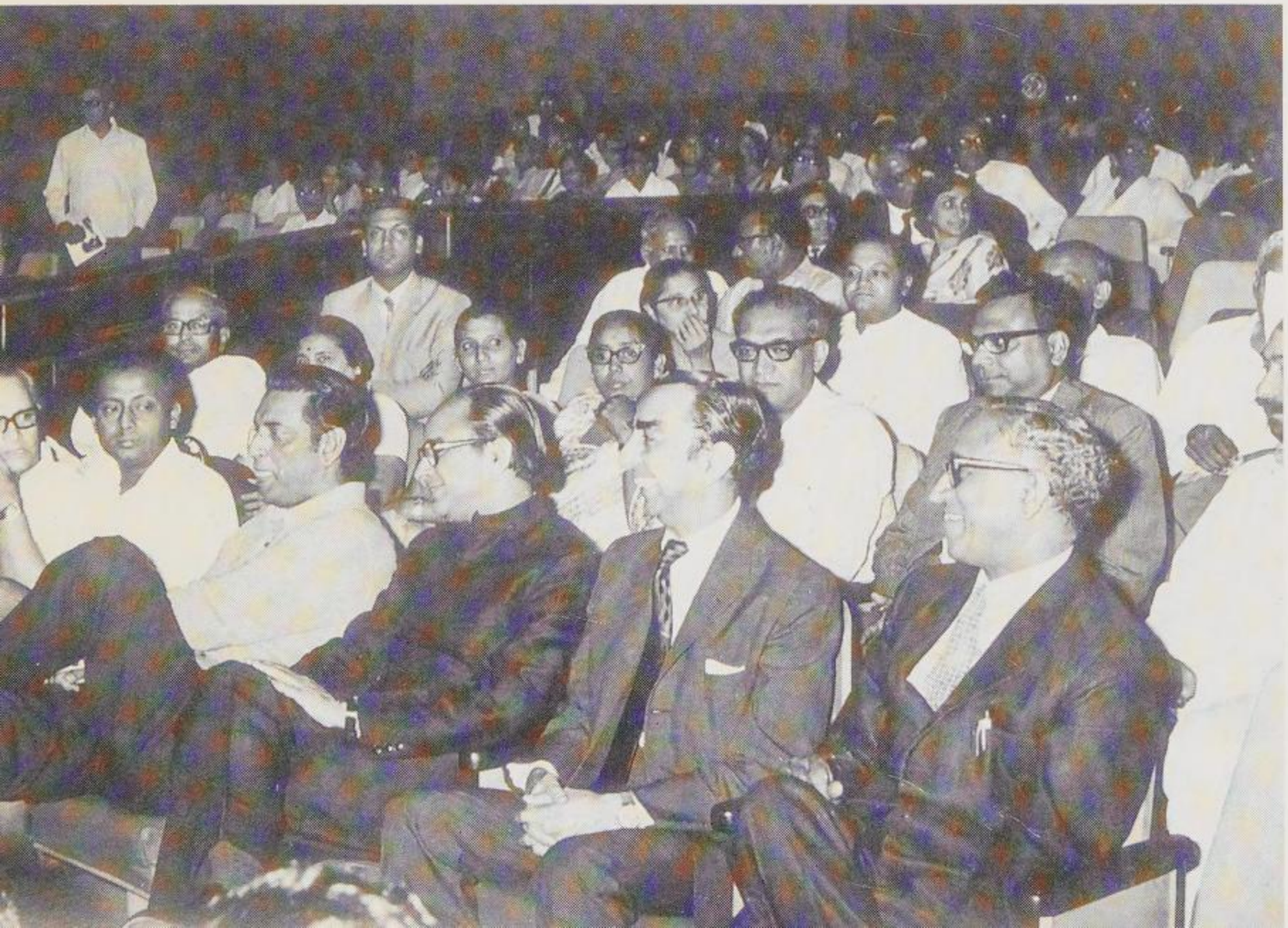


LEFT. At the London International Film Festival, 1977. With Ken Wlaschin. Courtesy : Ray family.

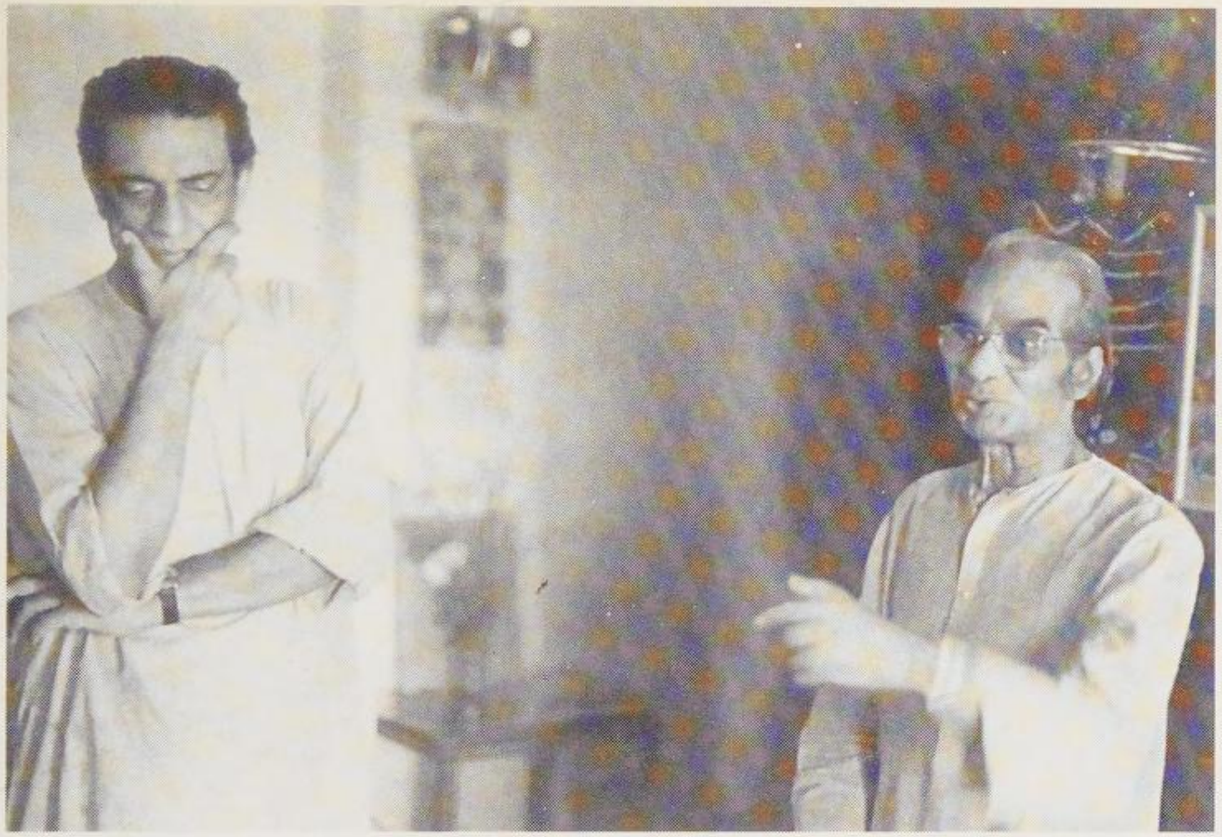
RIGHT. With Marlon Brando. Photograph : Subrato Patranobis.

At the London International Film Festival, 1977. With Derek Malcolm and Marie Seton. Courtesy : Ray family.

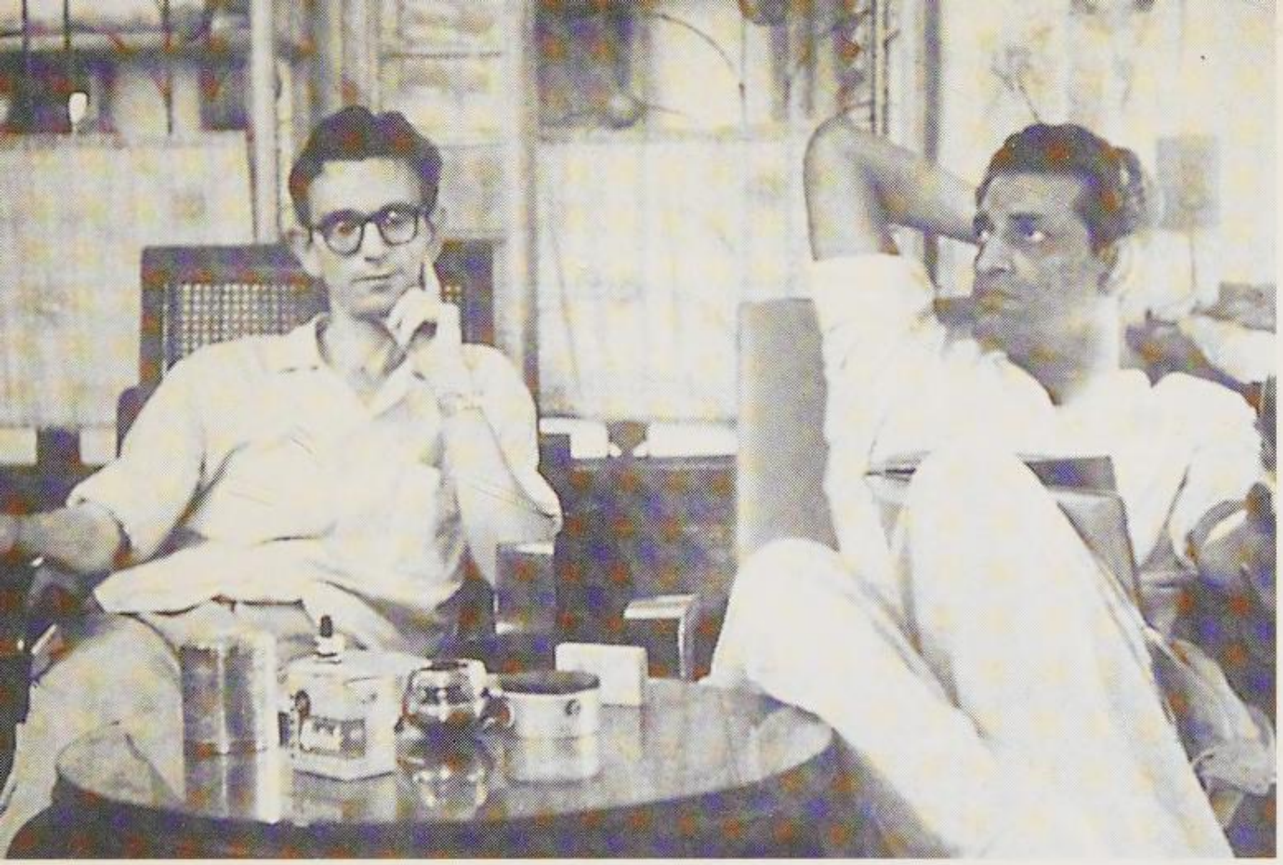
At the London International Film Festival, 1977. With Saeed Jaffrey and Dillys Powell. Courtesy : Ray family.



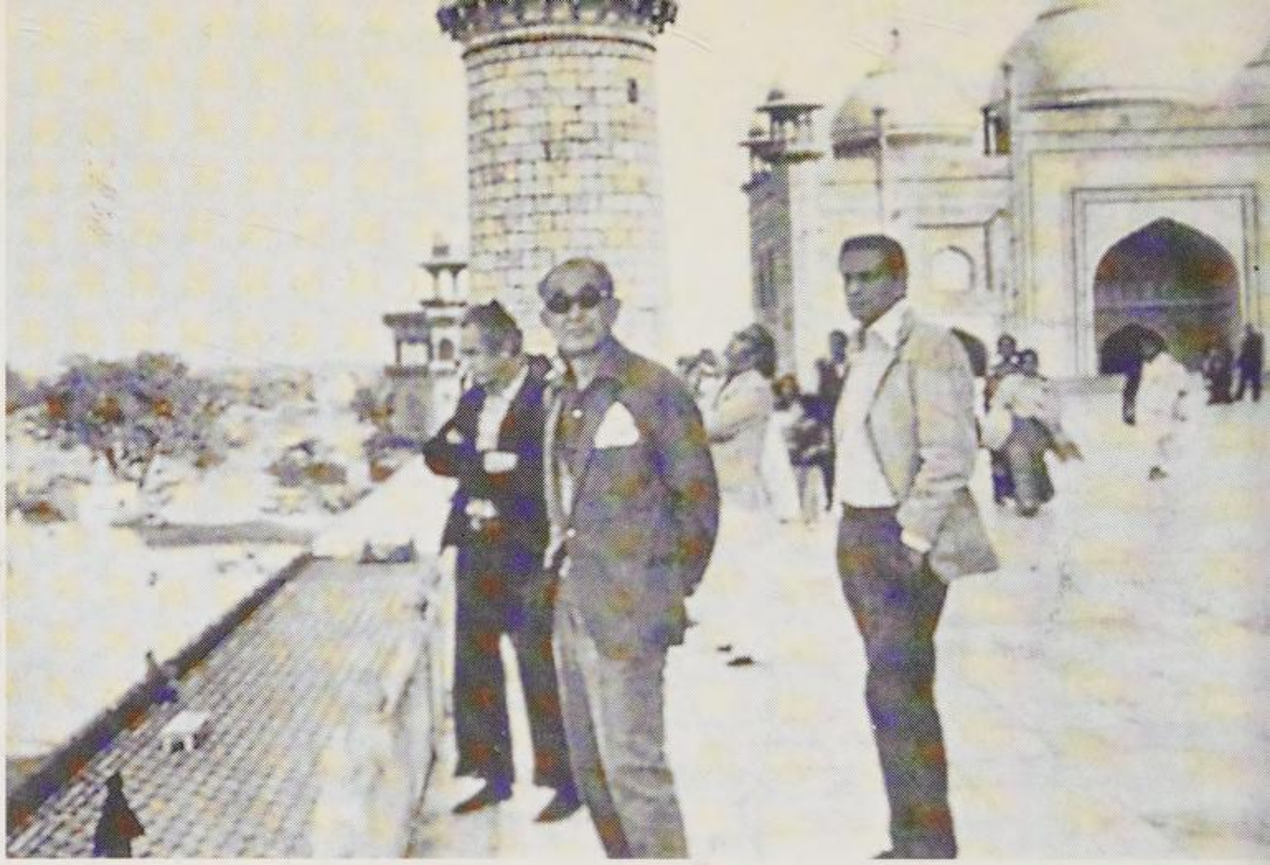
Top Left. At the International Film Festival, New Delhi 1965, with Indira Gandhi, then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, and Mrs K. Kawakita. Top Right. Ray addressing the audience at the inauguration of a retrospective of his films in aid of the Bangla Natmancha Pratishtha Samity, a federation of theatre groups in Calcutta, at Bombay, 1973, with I.K. Gujral, then minister for Information and Broadcasting and J.J. Bhabha. Bottom Left. Ray on the same occasion, in the audience, with Santi Das, the Convenor, to his right, and Mr Gujral and Mr Bhabha.



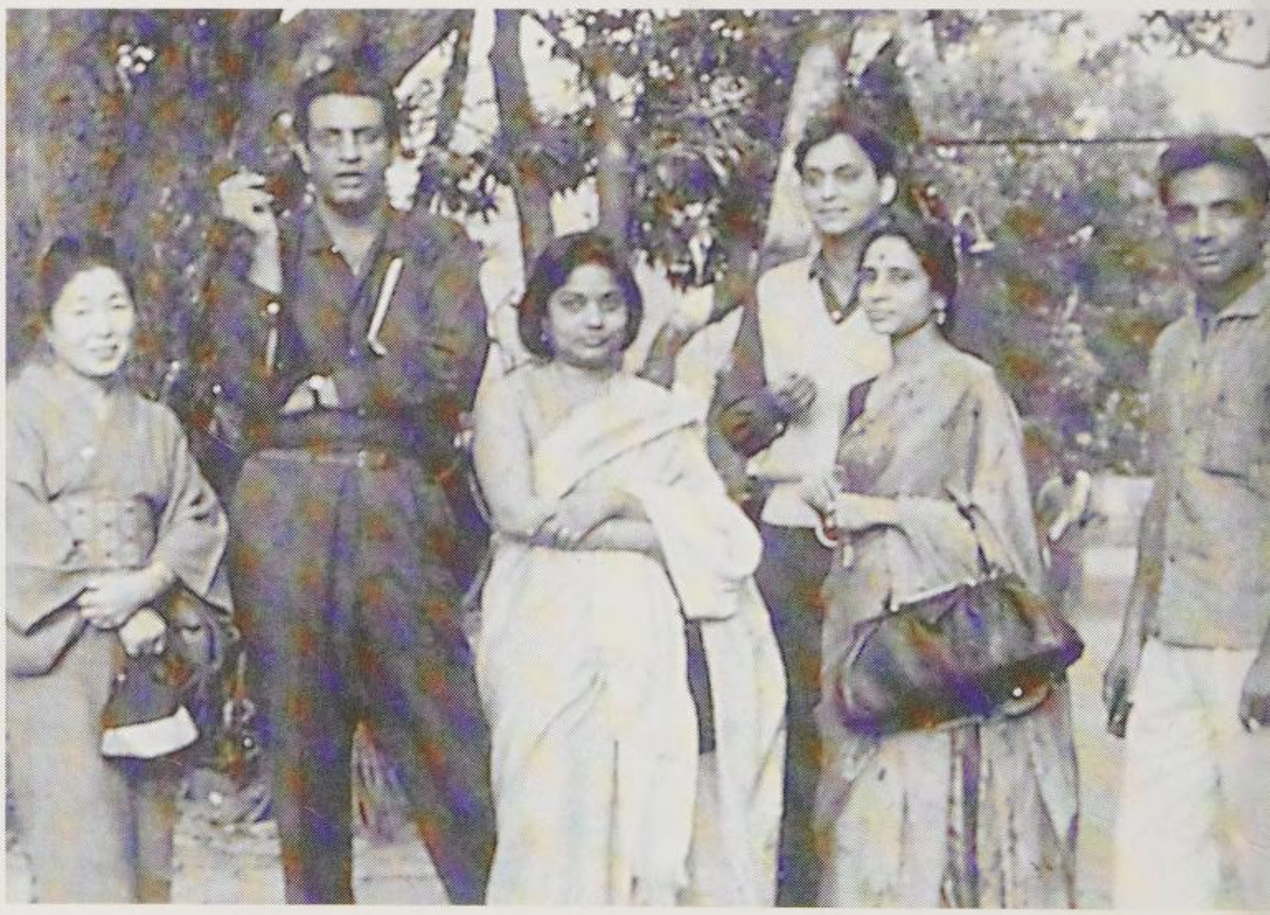
Top Left. With Uday Shankar. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh. Top Right. In his own study, with Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh. Bottom Left. With Ravi Shankar and his family, at Benaras. Courtesy : Ray family. Bottom Right. With Dinkar Kowshik. Photograph : Sandip Ray.



ith David Mccutcheon.
ourtesy : Ray family.

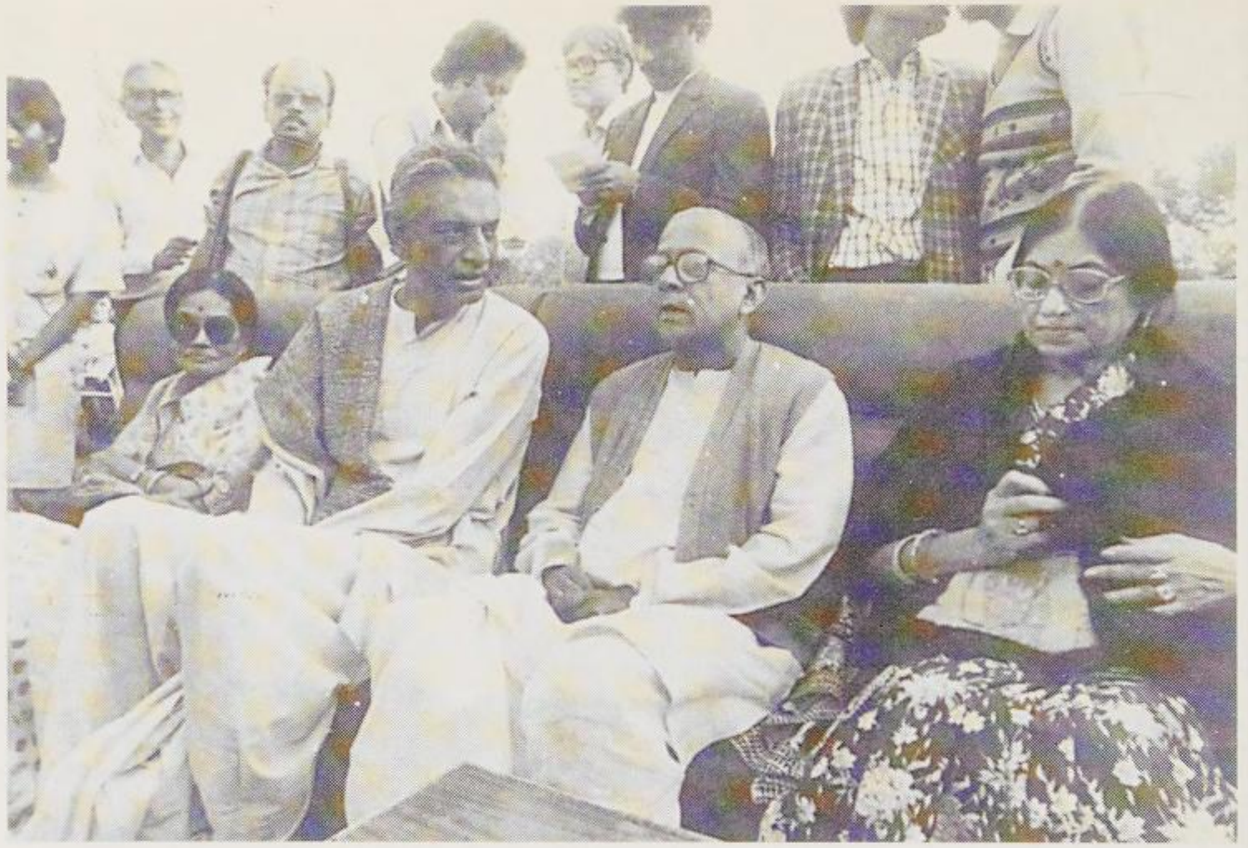


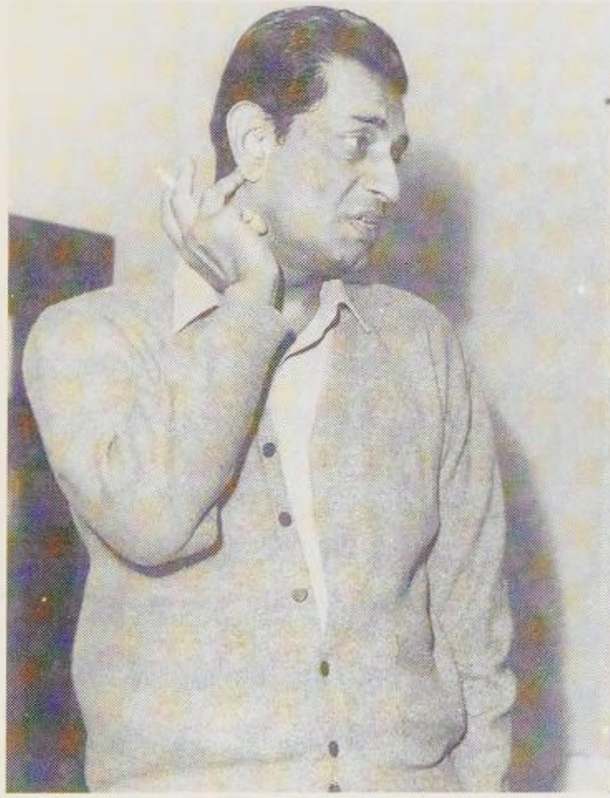
With Kanan Devi, veteran film actress. Photograph : Subrato Patranobis.



Top. With Antonioni and Kurosawa, before the Taj Mahal. Bottom. With Bijaya, Mrs. Kawakita, Soumitra Chatterjee, Gopa Ghoshal and Bansi Chandragupta. Courtesy : Ray family.

OP LEFT . With Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, Sandhya Roy, Babita, Sarbani and arendranath Bhattacharya, at the Berlin Festival, 1973. TOP RIGHT. ith Bijaya, Sandhya Roy and Babita, Berlin, 1973. BOTTOM RIGHT. At a at party for the Berlin Festival, 1969, with Bijaya, Sandip, Robi Ghosh, pen Chatterjee and others. Courtesy : Ray family.





Top Left . Receiving the Sankardeva Award from Prafulla Mahanta, Chief Minister of Assam. Photograph : Nemai Ghosh. Top Right. With Chief Minister of West Bengal Jyoti Basu and wife Bijaya, at the special ceremony where French President Mitterand conferred the Legion d' honneur on him. Bottom Left. With British MP, Andrew Foulds. Bottom Right . Mitterand confers the Legion d' honneur. Photographs : Subrato Patranobis.

SATYAJIT RAY
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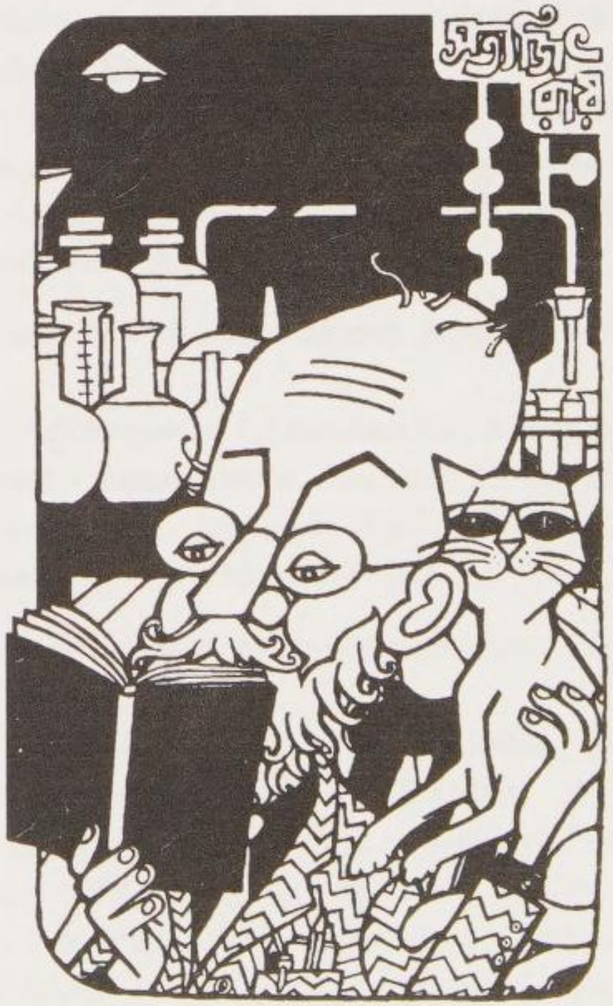

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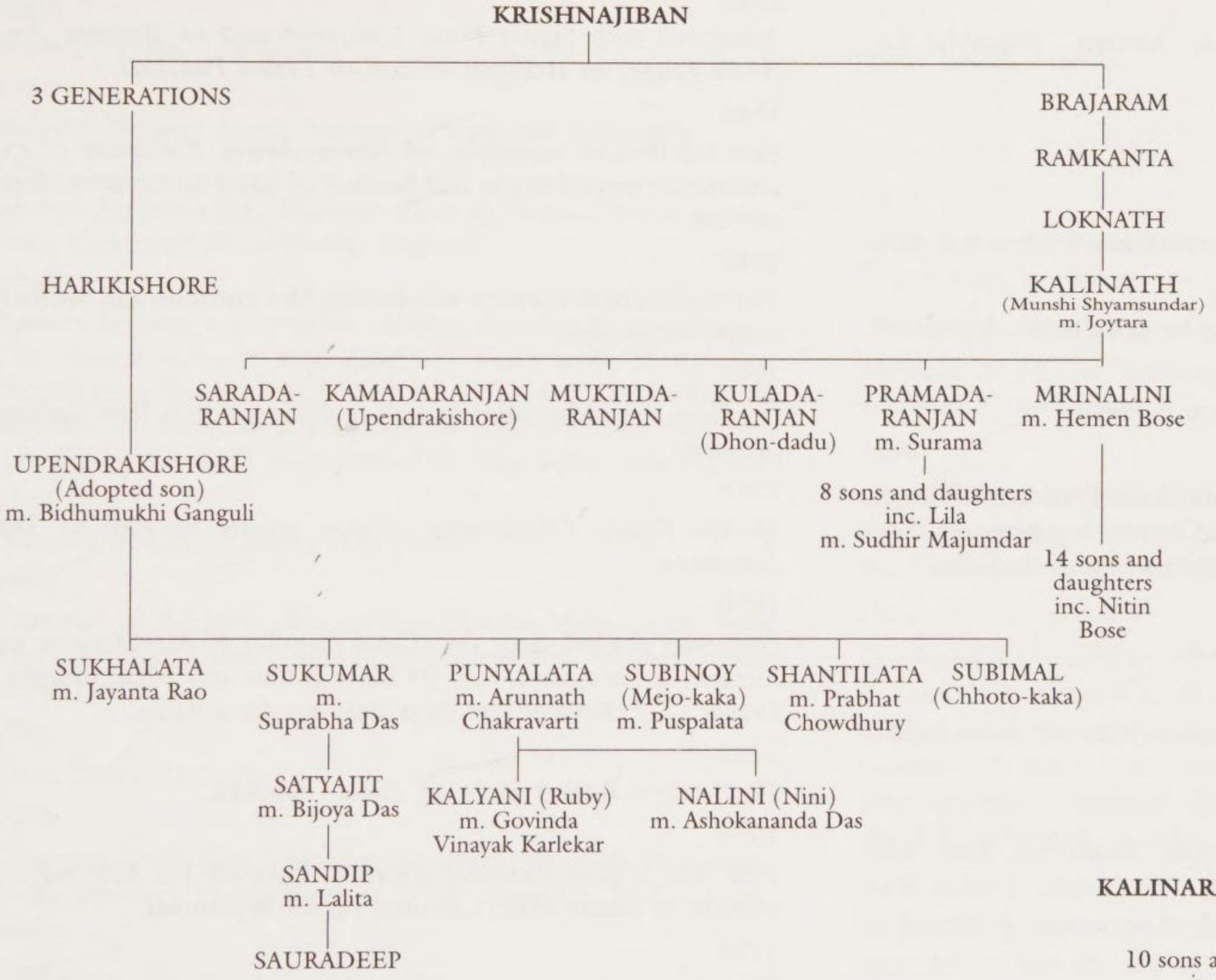
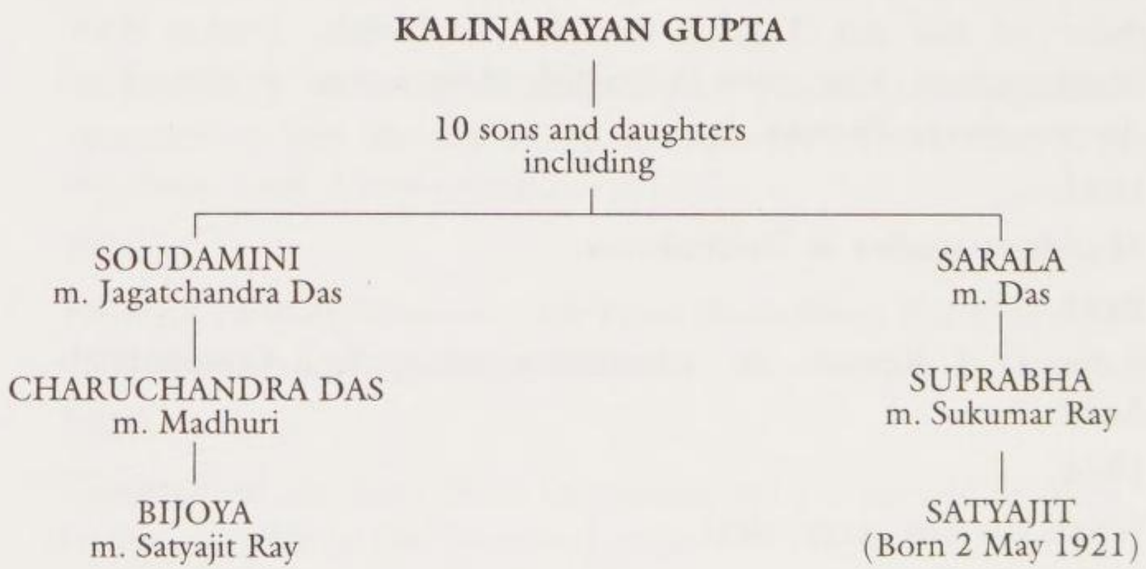
SATYAJIT RAY
a biographical profile

THE RAY FAMILY TREE (PATERNAL)



THE RAY FAMILY TREE (MATERNAL)



1921

Born 2 May. Father : Sukumar Ray. Mother : Suprabha Ray (née Das).

1923

Death of Sukumar Ray.

1926

Suprabha moves with Satyajit to live with her brother P.K. Das.

1927

U.Ray & Sons, printing press set up by grandfather, liquidated.

1931

Admitted to Ballygunge Government School.

1936

Passes his school-leaving examinations. Joins Presidency College. Wins First Prize in a Photography Contest organized by *Boy's Own Paper,* London. Growing interest in music and film.

1938

Passes the Intermediate Examination.

1940

Graduates with Honours in Economics. Joins Art School (Kala Bhavan) at Santiniketan.

1941

Visits Konarak, Ajanta, Ellora, Sanchi, Khajuraho, Bagh with three of his Art School friends (Prithwish, Dinkar and Muthuswami). First story in English 'Abstraction' published in *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

1942

Abandons studies at Santiniketan.

1943

Joins D. J. Keymer, an advertising agency, as a Commercial Artist.

1944

Writes his first screenplays.

1945

Associated with Signet Press. Commissioned to illustrate *Ām Āntir Venpu,* an abridged version of *Pather Panchali.*

1946

First full-fledged screenplay of *Gharey-Bairey.* Possibility of its production nipped in the bud because of Ray's uncompromising attitude.

1947

The beginning of contacts with foreign film institutes and the film society movement.

1948

Begins to live independently with mother. Calcutta Film Society founded.

1949

Marries Bijoya. Contributes review articles on film to *The Statesman.*

1950

First tour abroad. Sent on official capacity as Art Director to Europe by his agency. Saw 99 films in four and a half months. Leaves D. J. Keymer and joins Bensons for a while.

1952

27 October. Begins shooting *Pather Panchali.*

1955

First film *Pather Panchali* released. Receives the first public ovation at Senate Hall, Calcutta, on 23 September.

1956

Wins first international award at Cannes for *Pather Panchali.*

D. J. Keymer (India) dissolved in February. Ray becomes Vice-Chairman of the new Company, Clarion Advertising Services, in April.

1957

Visits Venice. Begins globetrotting. Civic reception at Ranji Stadium, Calcutta, on return from Venice, with the Golden Lion of St. Mark for his *Aparajito.*

1958

Visits New York, Brussels.

1959

Receives Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Padmasree.

1960

Mother Suprabha dies. Member of Jury in Vienna. Special honour from University of California, Berkeley.

1961

Revives *Sandesh,* a journal for children founded by grandfather, U.K. Raychowdhury. Beginning of literary work. Writes first Bengali story 'Banku-Babur Bandhu'. BETA Films of the Federal Republic of Germany selects him as one of the six best film directors of the world. Chairman of the Jury, Berlin Film Festival.

1962

Member of Jury at Berlin Film Festival.

1963

Chairman of the Jury, Moscow Film Festival. Visits Berlin. *Time* Magazine selects him as one of the eleven best directors of the world.

1964

Visits Berlin, Moscow.

1965

Chairman of the Jury, Third International Film Festival of India, Delhi. Receives Padmabhushan. Visits Acapulco, Berlin, Cambridge.

1966

Visits Berlin, Tokyo. Special award of honour at Berlin Film Festival.

1967

Visits New York, Paris, London. Awarded the Magsaysay Award. Sahitya Academy Award for *Professor Shonku.*

1968

Visits Manila, Melbourne.

1969

Visits Berlin, Tunisia.

1970

Visits Berlin.

1971

Visits London. Receives Star of Yugoslavia Award. Ananda Puraskar for literature.

1972

Member of Jury at Teheran and Toronto International Film Festivals. Visits Dhaka.

1973

Conferred Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa) by Delhi University. Visits Berlin, Chicago, Sweden. Awarded Golden Hugo by the Chicago Film Festival Committee.

1974

Conferred Doctorate by the Royal College of Arts, London. Presents State Awards to Marathi Films. Delivers Convocation address at the Twelfth Convocation of the Film and Television Institute of India. Entry on Ray in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Chairman of the Jury, Fifth International Film Festival of India.

1975

Honoured by the British Film Society as 'The most distinguished international film director in the last half-century.' Honoured by the Pune Civic Corporation.

1976

Receives Padmabibhushan. *Our Films Their Films*, first collection of film essays in English, published.

1977

Chairman of the Jury, Sixth International Film Festival of India. Invited to deliver the Norton Lectures at Harvard University.

1978

Conferred the degree of Doctor of Literature by Oxford University, England. Awarded Deshikottama by Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan. Special Award, Berlin Film Festival, as one of the three all time best directors along with Charles Chaplin and Ingmar Bergman.

1979

Receives Special Award, Moscow Film Festival, as one of the best nine directors of the twentieth century.

1980

Conferred Doctorate of Literature by Burdwan and Jadavpur Universities. Twenty-fifth year of *Pather Panchali* : DAVP inaugurates a mobile exhibition at Bangalore, the Indian Postal Department releases special cancellation, to commemorate the occasion.

1981

Doctorate (Honoris Causa) from Benaras Hindu University. Doctorate of Literature from North Bengal University. Receives Sisir Kumar Sahitya Puraskar, 'Fatik Smriti Puraskar' from Shishu Sahitya Parishad for *Ekei Baley Shooting*.

1982

Receives 'Homage a Satyajit Ray'. 'Headless Angels Trophy' award for special contribution to world cinema at Cannes Film Festival. Member of Jury, Venice Film Festival. At the same festival, awarded Golden Lion of St. Mark as one of the world's best ten film directors. Visconti Award at Rome Film Festival. Chairman of the Jury, Manila Film Festival. Vidyasagar Puraskar for children's literature, Government of West Bengal.

1983

Fellowship of British Film Institute.

1984

Undergoes Bypass Surgery at Houston.

1985

Conferred Doctorate of Literature by the University of Calcutta. Receives *Soviet Land* Nehru Award. Honoured with Dada Saheb Phalke award.

1986

Fellowship of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi.

1987

Receives D. Litt. from Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta. Dadabhai Naoraji Memorial Award. Children's Literature award from National Council of Educational Research and Training for his book, *Tintorettor Jishu*.

1989

Receives 'Legion of Honour', the highest honour of France. Best foreign short story award, France. Shankardev Award from Government of Assam. Orson Welles Award from University of California, Santa Cruz, USA.

1990

Shiromoni Award from Asian Paints.

1991

Special Award from Tokyo Film Festival Committee. Satyajit Ray retrospective and photographs exhibition at Cannes Film Festival.

1992

Special Oscar Award for lifetime achievement in filmmaking, Academy of Motion Pictures, USA. Honoured as National Professor. Conferred Bharat-Ratna, the highest State honour of his country. Passes away 23 April.

SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEOGRAPHY

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Pather Panchali	(VHS) : NFDC Video, Mumbai (ES)
	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Aparajito	(VHS) : NFDC Video, Mumbai (ES)
Parash Pathar	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Jalsaghar	(VHS) : NFDC Video, Mumbai (ES)
Apur Sansar	(VHS) : NFDC Video, Mumbai (ES)
Kanchanjungha	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata (ES)
	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Teen Kanya	(VHS/VCD) : Radhika Electronics, Kolkata
Abhijaan	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Mahanagar	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : RDB Video, Kolkata
Charulata	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : RDB Video, Kolkata
Kapurush-O-Mahapurush	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : RDB Video, Kolkata
Nayak	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : RDB Video, Kolkata
Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne	(VHS/VCD) : Radhika Electronics, Kolkata (ES)
Seemabaddha	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Ashani Sanket	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Sonar Kella	(VHS) : WBFDC Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
Joi Baba Felunath	(VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : RDB Video, Kolkata
Hirak Rajar Deshe	(VHS) : WBFDC Video, Kolkata (ES)
	(VCD) : Angel Video, Kolkata
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	(VCD) : Lara Video, New Delhi
Ganashatru	(VHS) : Sunita Video, Kolkata
	(VCD) : Lara Video, New Delhi
Shakha-Prashakha	(VHS/VCD) : Radhika Electronics, Kolkata
Agantuk	(VHS) : NFDC Video, Mumbai (ES)
	(VCD) : Lara Video, New Delhi
The Inner Eye	(VHS) : Films Division Video, Mumbai
Satyajit Ray	(by Shyam Benegal : VHS) : Films Division Video, Mumbai
Goopy Bagha Phire Elo	(by Sandip Ray : VHS) : Angel Video, Kolkata

Please Note : All VHS Limited Availability.

USA : (All with English Subtitles)

Pather Panchali	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Aparajito	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Jalsaghar	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Apur Sansar	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Devi	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Teen Kanya (*Two Daughters* : VHS)	Columbia Tristar Home Video
Mahanagar	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Charulata	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Jana Aranya	(VHS) : Columbia Tristar Home Video
Gharey-Bairey	(VHS) : Out of print : Limited Availability
Agantuk	(VHS) : First Run Features Home Video
Satyajit Ray — *Introspections*	(VHS) : Kultur Video

Also Available : *Ashani Sanket, Aranyer Dinratri and Pratidwandi* (Details Not Known)

UK : (All with English Subtitles)

Pather Panchali	(VHS) : Connoisseur Video
Aparajito	(VHS) : Connoisseur Video
Apur Sansar	(VHS) : Connoisseur Video
Shatranj ke Khiladi	(VHS) : Art House Original Video
Ganashatru	(VHS) : Connoisseur Video
Agantuk	(VHS) : Artificial Eye
The Apu Trilogy — Pather Panchali, Aparajito, Apur Sansar	(DVD) : Artificial Eye

Releasing soon : *Devi* (DVD), *Teen Kanya* (DVD), *Aranyer Dinratri* (DVD) and *Shatranj ke Khiladi* (DVD) : Artificial Eye

Websites (USA) : www.amazon.com
www.moviesunlimited.com

FRANCE : (All with French Subtitles)

Pather Panchali	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Aparajito	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Jalsaghar	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
	(DVD) : Films sans Frontieres
Apur Sansar	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Devi	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Teen Kanya	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Mahanagar	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Charulata	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Aranyer Dinratri	(VHS) : Films sans Frontieres
Ashani Sanket	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Shatranj ke Khiladi	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Joi Baba Felunath	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Hirak Rajar Deshey	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Sadgati	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Ganashatru	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Shakha-Prashakha	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie
Nayak	(VHS) : Les Films de ma vie

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Volume 2 — *The House of Death : Hatyapuri, Mystery at Golok Lodge : Golokdham Rahasya, The Criminals of Kathmandu : Joto Kando Kathmandutey, Napoleon's Letter : Napoleoner Chithi, Tintoretto's Jesus : Tintorettor Jishu, The Disappearance of Ambar Sen : Ambar Sen Anthardhan Rahasya, The Gold Coins of Jehangir : Jehangirer Swarnamudra, Crime in Kedarnath : Ebar Kando Kedarnathey, The Acharya Murder Case : Bosepukurey Khunkharapi, Murder in the Mountains : Darjeeling Jamjamat, The Case of the Apsara Theatre : Apsara Theatre-er Mamla, Peril in Paradise : Bhuswarga Bhayankar, Shakuntala's Necklace : Shakuntalar Kanthahar, Feluda in London : Londoney Feluda, The Mystery of the Pink Pearl : Golapi Mukta Rahasya, Dr. Munshi's Diary : Dr. Munshir Diary, The Mystery of Nayan : Nayan Rahasya, Robertson's Ruby : Robertson-er Ruby, The Magical Mystery : Indrajal Rahasya.*]

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A Room with a View [E. M. Forster] 127
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Abol Tabol [Sukumar Ray] 9
Ajanta and Ellora 20-24
Amar Galpa Lekhar Katha [Leela Majumdar] 84
Amrita Bazar Patrika 43, 47
Autobiography of an Unknown Indian [Nirad C. Chaudhuri] 150
Ballygunge Government High School 3
Bensons 32
Berlin Film Festival, *between 212-13*
Betla 37
Bounce Lighting 124
Cahiers du Cinema 68, 76
Calcutta Film Society 10, 118
Calcutta Gramophone Society Concert 36
Chipador 37
Cinewave 80
Clarion Advertising Service Private Limited 32, 35
Crisis in Civilization [R. Tagore] 77, 158
D. J. Keymer Ltd. 5, 7, 26, 27, 28, 31-35, 52
Debonair 146
Delhi 54
Desh 92, 111
Digha 37
Ekshan 27, 54
Elephanta 24-25
Esquire 119
Exiles [play, James Joyce] 148
Film [Roger Manvell] 10
Film Form [S. Eisenstein] 10
Film Sense [S. Eisenstein] 10
Film Technique [V. Pudovkin] 10
Film 125
Filmfare 124
Films in Review 114
Five Little Pigs [Agatha Christie] 92
'Four-fifty from Paddington' [Agatha Christie] 92
Frontier 147
Gharey-Bairey ('Home and the World') [novel, R. Tagore] 149
Gregorian Chants 36, 154
Guardian 142, 144
Ha ja ba ra la [Sukumar Ray] 9
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark [W. Shakespeare] 90, 91, 97
Hindusthan Standard 112
Howard's End [novel, E. M. Forster] 159
Indian Express Magazine 152, 155
Indian Film Culture 130
International Film Festival of India 154, *between 212-13*
Kala Bhavan xiii, 7, 17, 26, 28, 31, 51, 52
Karla 24-25
Ketchki 37
Khajuraho 25-26
Konark 26
Krishnakanta's Will [Bankimchandra Chatterjee] 91
Le Monde 68
Life and Letters Today 10
Living Cinema [L. Marcorelles] 72
London International Film Festival *between 212-13*
London Times 15
London 9, 32
Los Angeles Times 134, 138
Lucknow 37
Mahanagar 84
Max Mueller Bhavan xi
Montage 115, 116, 123, 159n
'Murder in the Mews' [Agatha Christie] 92
Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) 13

'Neel Tara' [Parashuram] 91
New York Times 118
New Yorker 117, 137, 142, 149
Oedipus the King [Sophocles] 90
Oxford Mission Orchestra 38-39
Parichay 122
Partisan Review 122
Pather Panchali [novel, Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay] 9
Penguin Film Review 10
Poetics [Aristotle] 64
Presidency College 3
Rakta Karabi [drama, R. Tagore] 147
Rangmashal xv
Sahajpath [R. Tagore] 54
Samatat 14
San Francisco Examiner 135
Sandesh x, xii, xv, xvi, 43, 51, 53, 54, 80, *between 80-81,* 93
Santiniketan 17-26, 28, 31, 32, 37, 51-54
Satyajit Ray : The Inner Eye [Andrew Robinson] 77, 159n
Sight and Sound 10, 112, 125, 128, 139, 145
Signet Press xv, 9, 27, 53
Tang and Sung painters 17
Tasher Desh [R. Tagore] 54
Teheran Children's Festival 143, *between 212-13*
The Cherry Orchard [A. Chekov] 120
The Death of Ivan Illyich [L. Tolstoi] 155
The Family of Man 13
The Film Till Now [Paul Rotha] 10
'The Hidden Treasure' [R. Tagore] 94
The Indian Film Quarterly 10
'The Insect in the Flame' [Sharadindu Banerjee] 92
The Man Within [Graham Greene] 146
'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' [Edgar Allan Poe] 90
The Observer Weekend Review 129
The Observer 36
'The Original Vice' [Sharadindu Banerjee] 91-92
The Other Ray 15
The Statesman 30, 43
The Sunday Times 36
The Times of India 114
Twilight of Empire [Malcolm Muggeridge] 127
U. Ray and Sons 1, 80
Variety 118, 138, 143
Western classical music 7, 39
Youth Cultural Institute 31

Figures in italics refer to illustrations.

INDEX OF NAMES

Anderson, Lindsay 112
Aronson, Alex 7, 52
B. H. 124-125
Bach 17, 18, 36, 37, 154
Baij, Ramkinkar 17, 28, 31, 52
Bandyopadhyay, Bibhutibhusan 9, 62-65, 67, 70, 107, 114, 122
Bandyopadhyay, Tarashankar 123
Banerjee, Sharadindu 92, 95, 100
Bartok 37
Basu, Samaresh 84
Beethoven 17, 18, 36, 37, 39
  Pastoral Symphony 18
Benegal, Shyam 69, 146
Bergman, Ingmar 117-18
Bose, Acharya Nandalal 7, 17, 20, 25, 28, 31, 51-54
Bose, Amalendu 122-123
Bose, Mukul 4
Bose, Nitin 4
Brahms 36, 37
Brancusi 17
Bresson, Robert 62, 70
Capra, Frank 124
Cezanne 17
Chakravarti, Punyalata 83, 101
Chandragupta, Bansi xv, xvi, 10, 11, 104, 107, 111, *between 212-13*
Chatterjee, Chanchal 11
Chatterjee, Ramananda 52
Chattopadhyay, Satyen 107, 110
Chopin 36
Christie, Agatha 92, 96
Crowther, Bosley 14
Dali, Salvador 17
Das Gupta, Chidananda 10, 11, 154
Das Gupta, Hari S. 11
Das Gupta, Kali Sadhan 11
Das, Nalini (née Chakravarti) 3, 80
Das, Prasanta Kumar (maternal uncle of Satyajit Ray) 3
De Sica, Vittorio 70, 110, 112, 118, 119, 122, 127
Debussy 36, 37
Dey, Bishnu xi
Dey, Panchkadi 92, 98
Dovzhenko, Alexander 119
Doyle, Arthur Conan 90
Dutta, Dulal 111
Dutta, Pankaj 107-111
Eichelbaum, Stanley 134-135
Eisenstein, Sergei 10, 70, 111, 119, 121
French, John 11
Flaherty, Robert 111, 112, 119
Ford, Ford Madox 139
Forster, E. M. 127, 128, 150, 152, 155, 159
Gandharva, Sawai 18
Gangoly, O.C. xv, 8, 28, 30, 34, *between 212-13*
Ganguly, Kadambini 1, *2*
Ghatak, Ritwik 57, 69, 146
Ghosal, Subhas 11
Ghosh, Bhupendra 107, 110
Giliatt, Penelope 116-17
Gupta, D. K. 8-9, 27, 31, 32, 34
Haldar, Asitkumar 25
Handel 36
Hart, Henry 114
Haydn 36
Houston, Penelope 125-28
Huston, John 13
Ibsen, Henrik 76
Jacobs, Jane 129-30

Kael, Pauline, xiv 117-22, 135-37, 140-42, 148-49
Kandinsky 17
Karlekar, Kalyani (née Chakravarti) xiii, xvii, 1-5
Kaul, Mani 69
Khan, Abdul Karim 18
Khan, Alladiya 18
Khan, Faiyaz 18
Khan, Z. H. (Bunty) 11
Klee, Paul 17
Korin 17
Kowshik, Dinkar xiii, xvii, 17-26, *between 47-49*, *between 212-13*
Kumar, Kishore *between 76-77*
Kurosawa, Akira 118
Lechner, Dr. Georg xi
Lejeune, C.A. 36
Liszt 36
Lyod 143
Mahalanobis, Madhurilata 1, 2
Mahalanobis, Praphulla 2
Mahalanobis, Prasanta 2
Maitra, Satyen 11
Majumdar, Kamal Kumar 11, 14
Majumdar, Leela 80, 83-85, 99, 101
Majumdar, Niranjan 111-12
Malcolm, Derek 143-44
Marcorelles, Louis 68, 71, 72
Maskowitz, Gene 138
Masud, Iqbal 146, 149-52, 154-55, 155-60
McCutchion, David 130-32
Micciollo, Henri 149
Milne, Tom 138-39, 144-45
Miro, Juan 17
Mitra, Premendra 86, 93
Mitra, Sombhu xi
Mitra, Subrata 12, 70, 104, 107, 110, 114
Mozart 17, 36, 37
  Marriage, of Figaro 37
  Cosi fan tutte 37
  Don Giovanni 37
  Magic Flute 37
Mukherjee, Binodebehari 7, 17, 28, 31, 52, 54
Mukherjee, Kumar 11
Mukhopadhyay, Subhas 80
Munshi, Annada 8, 28, 30, 32, 34
Muthuswamy, M. 17, 20-26
Neogy, Prithwish 7, 11, 17, 20-26, 31, 32, 52, *between 212-13*
Phalke, Dadasaheb 62
Picasso 17
Poe, Edgar Allan 90
Powell, Dilys 36
Pudovkin, Vsevolod 10
Raha, Kiranmoy 147
Rao, Sukhalata 83, 101
Ravel 36, 37
Ray, Bijaya xvii, xviii, *between 2-3,* 5, 39, *between 47-49, between 212-13*
Ray, Sandip xviii, *between 2-3,* 5, 159n, *between 211-13*
Ray, Satyajit
  as a book designer, illustrator and artist, 9, *between 47-49,* 51-54, *between 54-55, between 80-81, between 188-89*
  as a typographer, 28-29, 33 ; Bizarre, *between 54-55* ; Daphnis, *between 54-55* ; Ray Roman, xv, *between 54-55*
  as a music composer, 36-39, *between 76-77*
  as a writer, 14-15, 83-102
    detective fiction, 15, 90-100
    fictional characters created :
      Ganguly, Lalmohan (Jatayu) 15, 93, 94, 96, 96-98
      Mitra, Pradosh (Felu Mitter) 15, 92-98, 99, 100
      Mitra Tapeshranjan (Topshey) 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98-100
      Shonku, Trilokeshwar, 14-15, 80, 89-90
    science fiction 15, 84, 88, 89

awards and citations received 205-212, *between 212-13*
his career in advertising 8-9, 30-35
his literary works
'All the Trouble in Kathmandu' 95, 98
'Anath-Babu's Terror' 90
'Asamanja-Babu's Dog' 88
'Bhuto' 88
'Bipin-Babu's loss of memory' 85
'Class-friend' 85, 88
'Confusion in Gangtok' 95
'Darjeeling Asthir' 98-99
'Felu-da's Detective Acts' 93
'Glory to Baba Felunath' 95
'Hullabaloo in Gosainpur' 98
'Khagam' 88, 90
'Kompu' 89-90
'Patal-Babu, Film Star' 87-88
'Pikoo's Diary' 84, 101-02
'Professor Shonku in the aspect of Saturn' 90
'Ratan-Babu and that man' 90
'Sahadev-Babu's Portrait' 85
'Scandal in Kailash' 99
'Sujan Harbola' 85
'Swarnaparni' 90
'The Affair's in Kedarnath This Time' 94, 102
'The Attic' 85, 93
'The blue-streaked jelly' 84
'The Curse of Chhinnamasta' 95
'The Emperor's Ring' / 'The Badshah's Ring' 94, 97
'The Felicitatory Scroll' ['The Citation'] 86-88
'The Golden Fortress' 95, 96, 97
'The Last Night of Mr. Sasmal' 88
'The Maths Teacher, Mr. Pink and Tipu' 85-86
'The Millionaire' 85
'The Mystery of the Box' / 'A Mysterious Case' 95
'The Rose-tinted Pearl' / 'The Mystery of the OrangeTinted Pearl' 98, 100
'The Royal Bengal Mystery' 94
'The Story of Jaichand Baral' 100
'Trouble in the Graveyard' 95
'Two Magicians' 88
'Banku-Babu's Friend' 88
Byomjatrir Diary 80
Jakhan Chhoto Chhilam [When I was Little] 84
Our Films Their Films 15, 71, 159n
Phatikchand 88-89
Stories 15
(*see also* Bibliography)
reviews of his films, 107-60

Ray, Subinay (paternal uncle of Satyajit Ray) 2, *between 2-3,* 80, 83, 101
Ray Sukumar (father of Satyajit Ray) 1, *between 2-3,* 40, 51, 60, 80, 83-84, 89, 94, 101
Ray, Suprabha (mother of Satyajit Ray) 2, *between 2-3*, 19, 20
Ray, Upendrakishore (grandfather of Satyajit Ray) 1, *between 2-3*, 51, 60, 80, 83-84, 94, 101
Renoir, Jean 10, 112, 118, 119, 122, 136, 143, 153, 156, 159
Roberge, Father Gaston xiii, 62-78, 152-154, 159
Robinson, Andrew 77
Rossellini, Roberto 112, 143
Roud, Richard 142
Roy, Dr. B. C. 12, 108
Roy, Jamini 17
Roy, Ranen 11
Sakalasuriya 17
Sarkar, Kobita 115-16
Schumann 36
Sen Gupta, Dr. S. C. 6-7
Sen, Mrinal 57, 69, 146
Sethi, Nitin 114-15
Seton, Marie 123-124, 132-134, 146

Shahani, Kumar 69
Shamlal 113-14
Shankar, Ravi xi, *between 76-77,* 107, 114, *between 212-13*
Shankar, Uday xi
Sotatsu 17
Spender, Stephen 5
Tagore, Abanindranath 17
Tagore, Rabindranath 17, 18, 51, 52, 62, 86, 119, 122, 148
Tagore, Rathindranath 20
Tarkovsky, Andrei 68-69
Tesson, Charles 59-61, 76-77
Thomas, Kevin 134, 137-38
Truffaut, Francois 118, 156
Tynan, Kenneth 128-129
Vaze, Buwa 18
Wagner 36
Wheeler, Monroe 13
Zavattini, Cesare 112

SATYAJIT RAY'S FILMS

Abhijan (The Expedition) 58, 123-24, *between 132-33*
Agantuk (The Stranger) 58, 62, 77, 85, 155-60, *between 172-73*
Aparajito (The Unvanquished) 34, 35, 36, 54, 58, 63-65, 72, 104, 113-14, 119, 122, 123, *between 132-33*, 146
Apur Sansar (The World of Apu) 61, 64-67, 70, 72, *between 76-77*, 115-16, 117, 119, 126, *between 132-33*, 136, 148, 152
Aranyer Dinratri (Days and Nights in the Forest) 29, 58, 71, *between 76-77*, 134-137, 140, 141, 142, 160, *between 172-73*
Ashani Sanket (Distant Thunder) 58, 71, 140-42, 143, *between 172-73*
Balasaraswati 71, *between 76-77, between 132-33*
Charulata (The Lonely Wife) 37, 58, 62, 68, 70-71, *between 76-77,* 122, 125-28, 129, *between 132-33,* 133, 140, 149, 151, 155, 156
Chidiakhana (The Menagerie) 58, *between 172-73*
Devi (The Goddess) *29,* 54, 58, 72, 116-17, 120-22, 125, 126, 127, *between 132-33,* 136, 140
Ganashatru (An Enemy of the People) 58, 73, 76-78, *between 76-77,* 152, 153, 157, 158, 159, 160, *between 172-73*
Gharey-Bairey (The Home and the World) 54, 58, 62, 75, 77, 148-52, 156, *between 172-73*
Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (The Adventures of Goopy and Bagha) 37, 38, 58, *between 76-77*, 132-34, 147, 156, *between 172-73*
Hirak Rajar Deshey (The Kingdom of Diamonds) 58, *between 76-77,* 147, *between 172-73*
Jalsaghar (The Music Room) 37, 58, 72, *between 76-77*, 114-15, 120, 127, 128, *between 132-33*, 139, 143, 144
Jana Aranya (The Middle Man) 61, *between, 76-77,* 143-44, 154, *between 172-73*
Joi Baba Felunath (The Elephant God) 15, 58, *between 76-77*, 146, *between 172-73*
Kanchanjungha (29, 54, 58, 62, 72, 125, 126, 127, 131, *between* 132-33, 138, 156
Kapurush O Mahapursh (The Coward and the Holy Man) 128-130, *between 132-33*
Mahanagar (The Big City) 37, 58, 124-25, 126, 127, 128, *between 132-33,* 138
Manihara 122, *between 132-133*
Nayak (The Hero) 35, 62, 101, 130-132, *between 132-33,* 156
Parashpathar (The Philosopher's Stone) *between 132-33,* 134
Pather Panchali (Song of the Little Road) 11-14, 26, 27, 33, 34, 36, 53, 54, 57-60, 62-66, 70, 72, 85, 104, *between 104-05,* 107-12, 113, 114, 118-19, 122, 127, 128, *between 132-33,* 148, 155, 156, 159, 160
Pikoo, 101-02, *between 172-73*
Pratidwandi (The Adversary) 58, 70, 73-75, 76, 137-39, 154, *between 172-73*
Rabindranath Tagore 71, *between 76-77, 77, between, 132-33,* 157-58
Sadgati (Deliverance) 58, *between 76-77, between 172-73*
Samapti 73, 75-76, 122, 123, *between 132-33*
Seemabaddha (Company Limited) 58, 61, 143, 154, *between 172-73*
Shakha-Prashakha (Branches of a Tree) 58, 60-61, 72, *between 76-77*, 78n, 102, 152-55, 159, 160, between 172-73
Shatranj Ke Khiladi (The Chess Players) 58, *between 76-77,* 144-45, 160, *between 172-73*
Sikkim, between 172-73
Sonar Kella (The Golden Fortress) 15, 58, 71, 143, 146, *between 172-73*
Sukumar Ray, between 172-73
Teen Kanya (Three Daughters) 37, 54, 122-123, *between 132-33* (see also *Manihara, The Postmaster, Samapti)*
The Alien [unmade film] 155, 156
The Apu Trilogy 63-67, 69, 70, 72, 76, 117, 119, 121, 136, 137, 138, 140, 141, 156 (see also *Pather Panchali, Aparajito, Apur Sansar*)
The Inner Eye 7, 71, *between 132-33*

The Postmaster 62, 68, *between 76-77*, 120, 122, *between 132-33*
Two Daughters [*Postmaster* and *Samapti*] 120, 125, 126, 127, 128, 140
Two, between 172-73
(*see also* Filmography)

OTHER FILMS

A Passage to India [David Lean] 148
Andrei Rublev [Tarkovsky] 68-69
Bicycle Thieves [De Sica] 70, 104
Creative Artists of India : Satyajit Ray [B. D. Garga] 159
David and Lisa [Frank Perry] 117, 118
Earth [Dovzhenko] 119
Gold Rush [Chaplin] 20
Ivan the Terrible [Eisenstein] 10
Kondura [Shyam Benegal] 146
Man of Aran [Flaherty] 119
Nanook of the North [Flaherty] 119
Parasuram [Mrinal Sen] 146
Shakespearewallah [Ivory-Merchant] 39
Shame [Bergman] 141
Sundays and Cybele [Serge Bourgignon] 118
Swann in Love [Schloendorff] 149
The Battleship Potemkin [Eisenstein] 70
The Lady with the Little Dog [Josef Heifitz]
The Magnificent Ambersons [Orson Welles] 120
The River [Renoir] 118
The Seventh Seal [Bergman] 117
Umberto D [De Sica] 118
Un condamne a mort s'est e chappe [R. Bresson] 70
Yellow Submarine [George Duning] 133

Satyajit Ray : An Intimate Master is an invaluable source work for studies in the work of Satyajit Ray and offers fascinating reading at the same time. Specially commissioned articles by experts and some of Ray's closest associates, relations and friends provide insights into the entire range of the creativity of Satyajit Ray, one of the world's greatest filmmakers — as artist and designer, writer, and filmmaker — and the environment that nurtured him. The contributions unravel features never before touched upon — all those subterranean elements that went into the making of his films and his artistic character. They should serve to open up new approaches to and possibilities for fresh readings of Ray's works in fiction, design and filmmaking alike. The 400-odd illustrations — several of them appearing in print for the first time — bring together a wide range of film stills, working stills, book illustrations, early drawings and sketches, layouts for advertisement insertions, film posters, brochures, portraits, caricatures, jacket designs, giving viewers a rare chance of studying the entirety of Ray's visual imagination and artistic craftsmanship.

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A selection of reviews of Ray's films, national and international, arranged chronologically and filmwise, offer a record of the world's perception of and response to his films over four decades, in historical perspective.

Continued

The volume as a whole, the product of several years' research, has drawn on the rich collection of relevant documentary and archival material and memorabilia lying with the Ray family; and with the thoroughness that has gone into its documentation, it will be, for several years to come, the most authoritative and exhaustive and reliable work on Satyajit Ray.

The contributors include artists Dinkar Kowshik, Paritosh Sen and K G Subramanyan, filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan, musician and music critic Adi Gazdar, film critics Gaston Roberge and Charles Tesson, advertising and public relations men R P Gupta and Subrata Banerjee, social activist Kalyani Karlekar, and literary critic Saroj Bandyopadhyay.

SANTI DAS, whose brainchild the volume is, has served in the Indian Revenue Service, and been an actor on stage and screen, spending the larger part of his acting career with Bohurupee, an experimental theatre group in Kolkata, which had Sombhu Mitra, the well-known actor-director, for its director. Das came to know Ray closely for the first time in the late sixties, when he organized three of the first retrospectives of Ray's films in India in aid of charities, and Ray proved to be helpful to his initiative, and a warm relationship develo[illegible]een the two. A social worker, Das has been a member of g[illegible]nd cultural delegations visiting foreign countries.

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